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Apologetics

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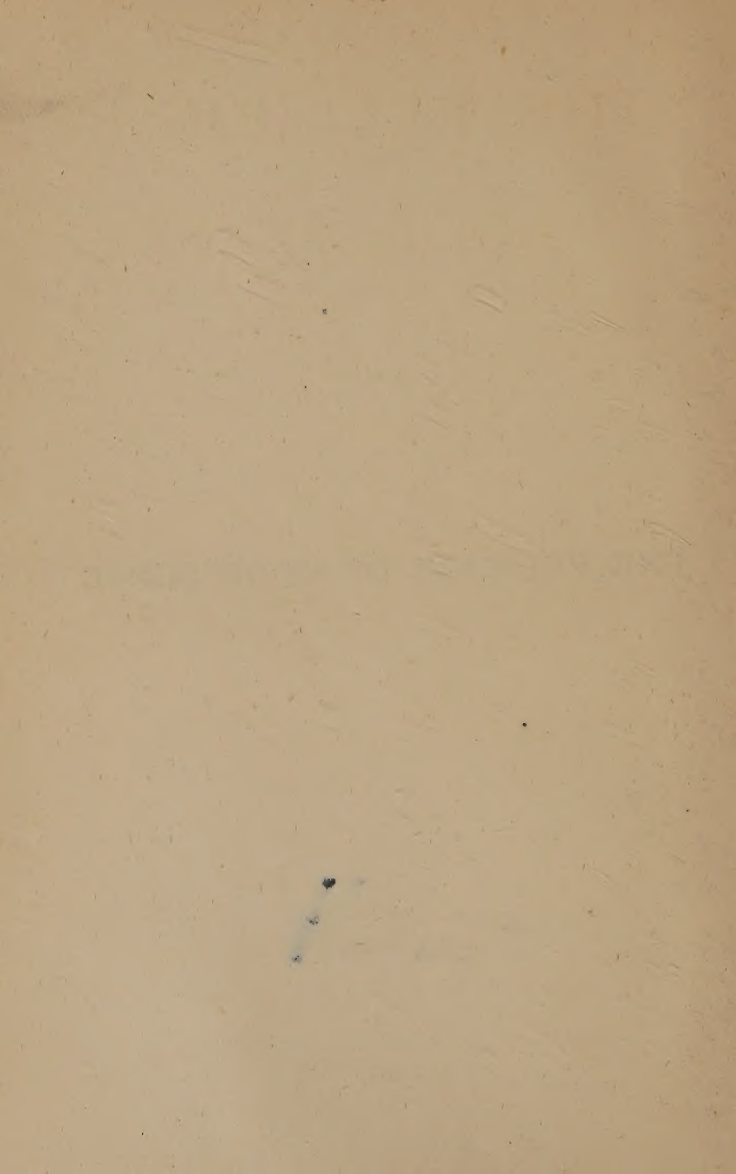
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THE RELIGION OF GOOD SENSE

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THE RELIGION OF
GOOD SENSE

BY

EDWARD RICHER

AUTHOR OF "THE KEY TO THE MYSTERY," ETC.

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JAMES SPEIRS

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INTRODUCTION.

THE chief difficulty met with in the attempt to render revealed religion the Religion of Common Sense, is to be found in the fact that it is presented to us as something mysterious, beyond the reach of the human understanding, and consequently without any fixed theory. On the one hand, we are called upon to receive it without explanation; on the other, we are ordered to accept the interpretation given us by a tribunal which decides without appeal, and which interdicts reasoning and examination. In both cases there is a struggle between reason, the very essence of which is liberty, and faith, the characteristic of which is entire submission. To render Religion the food of the mind, it is necessary that faith should be as independent as thought: the mind must be free, in order that its adhesion may be voluntary. In short, Religion must become at once knowledge and love.

Religious faith must be acquired, like all other convictions, by the exercise of the understanding; and common sense, which is the birthright of all, demands a religion based upon reason. No one, to whatever communion he may belong, has ever attempted to claim for the Sacred Writings the character of a code of laws which never contradicts itself. We feel, on the contrary, that the Bible, if placed in the hands of the people for the widest possible edification of all, without the explanation of the spiritual sense which it necessarily contains, would become a stumbling-block and an object of scandal. Nor has any one in the present day attempted to submit the facts of the spiritual order, or, as they are generally called, miracles, to a philosophical theory, the principles of which may be admitted by the most rigorous reason. And yet, without this theory, the divine things which belong to Religion, being considered as arbitrary notions and beyond the range of human knowledge, are disdained by ingenious philosophers, and turned into ridicule by the incredulous. The purpose of this

book, therefore, is, to forward the study of Religion and the Scripture, in the same way that the order of the universe and the marvels of the human heart are every day studied ; namely, by the aid of a doctrine. There is no possible science without a theory, nor can there be religion without a doctrine. Theory belongs to the freest sphere of the understanding : we cannot think that it is otherwise with religious doctrine. Examination, far from being forbidden in either, is what gives to both that guarantee of which they have need. If the principles of the doctrine here offered to the public as the only one capable of conducting the understanding to the acceptance of divine truth, are admitted, these principles will necessarily prove the doctrine.

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THE RELIGION OF GOOD SENSE.

FIRST CONVERSATION.

RELIGIOUS DOUBTS.—SEARCH FOR THE TRUTH.

MR. TESSIER was one of the best-educated notaries in one of the little provincial towns of France. By dint of industry and economy, he had amassed a considerable fortune, and was able henceforth to live on the amount of his savings without any further attention to business. But Mr. Tessier, who had a large share of good sense, knew that it is moderate desires which make a man really rich, and that a man never has enough, when he has more wants to gratify than means to gratify them with; consequently, in order to guard himself against those fictitious wants which torment the idle man, he continued to occupy himself as if he had still his fortune to make. His great principle was, that easy circumstances never give a man the privilege of being idle; and another of his maxims was, that a man who understands his profession is culpable towards society, if he withdraw from it precisely at the moment when his experience may be most useful.

These wise maxims, as well as his example and manners, rendered the notary the oracle of the entire district. His conduct was imitated, and his counsels were followed with the greatest deference. Everybody spoke of him with praise, and yet he was not quite at peace with his own conscience. Extensive reading, rather miscellaneous however than judiciously chosen, had raised certain doubts in his mind as to the truth of that religion which he had not yet openly rejected, but of which he was far from being convinced. He had several times endeavoured to receive it with frank and confiding faith; but after all his efforts his ever-wakeful curiosity was excited by new studies, and his doubts once more returned. His library was chiefly composed of the works of those who had distinguished themselves as the most unpromising antagonists of Christianity. Voltaire and Boling-

broke, Rousseau and St. Lambert, Boulanger and Dupuis, had been read and studied by him with all the attention of which he was capable. His Bible was covered with marginal notes, which gave tokens of an erudition much beyond what one would have expected to find in a man buried to the neck in his briefs. He had been sent by his father to one of our large cities, where he received a good education; he read the classical authors tolerably well; and with the exception of the *curé*, he was the only man in the parish who could speak a little Latin, and who consequently understood the words of the holy sacrifice offered for all.

This circumstance amused him greatly; and sometimes, when playing a game of cards with the *curé*, he quoted to him the words of St. Paul to the Corinthians: "How shall he who is of the unlearned say *amen* to thy thanksgiving, if he doth not understand that which thou sayest?" "Come, come," the worthy pastor would reply, "you jest on improper subjects, Mr. Tessier; you will be one day expelled from the bosom of the church."

When the notary became a husband and father, he took care to inculcate on his wife and son those religious sentiments which he had rejected himself. From this resulted a fresh examination into their truth, more careful, and perhaps more impartial, than all the others. Having already passed the age of the passions, he was not long in recognising that the natural condition of the human heart is one of belief. A state of uncertainty appeared to him an anomalous one, a disturbance introduced into the original law of our being by our blind self-love; and, in proportion as he became more disinterested, he perceived that he felt at the same time more inclined to cherish pious and charitable sentiments. Several years were spent in fresh studies and meditations; he read with care the popular works of the day; the *Genius of Christianity* and the *Evenings of St. Petersburg*, in particular, attracted his attention, but without his being in any degree farther advanced. Chateaubriand, he felt, was a poet who adorned the interior of the vase, without rendering more palatable its contents, which he could not swallow; while M. de Maistre, with his *theory of sacrifices*, rendered him still less disposed than before to kneel at the altar of a God who takes pleasure in the shedding of the blood of men. At last, no longer able to bear this uncertainty, which was so contrary to his very nature, he resolved to have done with it, and to consult those whom he deemed the most capable of enlightening him upon this subject.

Having no wish to become either a Jew or a Mahometan, Mr. Tessier's choice lay between the two great communions into which Christendom is divided—viz. the Roman Catholic

and the Reformed churches; and he applied, therefore, to the most learned divines of these two religions. The Roman Catholics replied to his questions by saying that the authority of the church had already decided for the entire world, and, consequently, for every individual; that, in religious matters, it is necessary either to believe or reject; and that he would act wisely to rest satisfied with the Bible as explained by his *curé*, and thus avoid the danger of falling into heresy. The Reformed church told him that every one might think as he chose about the enigmas of the Bible; but Mr. Tessier, who had no settled ideas on the matter, found himself much embarrassed with this answer. It was in vain he represented that his intellect had not been given him to remain a dead letter, and that the book of God should be its proper nourishment: they proved to him as clear as the day, that in matters of faith man is completely blind, and that salvation depends on an implicit and absolute faith in the merits of our Lord. Mr. Tessier did not know what to think of such doctrines. They might just as well have told him not to think at all, as to oblige him to believe, without permitting him to propound those questions which were the constant subject of his meditations, and which he liked so well to address to others. But for an unexpected circumstance which now arose, he would have lost all hope. In the midst of the apparent triumph of Jesuitism on the one hand, and the raillery of a sceptical generation, who laughed at what they called the ignorant, on the other, there suddenly arose in France a band of enthusiasts, who, taking the public good as their end and object, presented themselves as the apostles of a more enlightened and purified religion than that of any of their predecessors. These enthusiastic reformers were the disciples of St. Simon, or, as they are generally called, Socialists.

When about to take his hat and stick to go and consult them, Mr. Tessier hesitated, rubbed his forehead several times, and held the following colloquy with his conscience:—“So, after all, I am about to abandon the religion of my fathers! But, is it only now that I abandon it? Did I not cease to be a true Christian from the moment I neglected the duties imposed by its doctrines? But then it will be said that I am an apostate. An apostate! True, that is a bitter word; but can there be any real apostacy in seeking to renew the ties which bind me to God—ties severed by my own fault? No, certainly: in place of apostacy this is conversion. How can I fear to displease God by seeking for the means of returning to him? One thing is certain, it cannot be my duty to remain as I have been—a Christian in word and profession and an apostate in heart. Which is more agreeable to God—an outward faith, frequently the result of birth or education—a

faith at which I laugh in my inmost soul—or a living faith, which sinks into my heart as the result of impartial examination? I cannot hesitate. What does it matter how I answer? It is what I see in reality that God approves or condemns; and, certainly, he cannot approve of my doubts and sarcasms. And then, this phrase, *the religion of our fathers*, being applied to all possible religions, cannot be a proof of their truth; and it is truth alone that I seek. The Jews, when they were converted by the apostles, abandoned the religion of their fathers, and they did well. What would a Christian missionary reply to a Mahometan who would shelter himself beneath the phrase, 'the religion of his fathers?' He would, no doubt, say to him, 'Examine mine.' Let me also examine that of St. Simon. I am told that I have had the happiness to be born in a communion which is the sole depository of the truth. I should like to believe it; but as every communion makes the same pretensions, I must necessarily choose between them. The philosophers have destroyed my former belief; I meet with no reply to their criticisms; I must, therefore, look elsewhere to find the light. If, as the result of my studies, I cease to have any uncertainty—if I become better by them, God will not punish me for having substituted in my mind the praise of his holy name for the bitter irony which my old incredulity suggested. He will not look with wrath, I imagine, on the man who has become virtuous from principle. On the contrary, it is the incredulous man, the hypocrite or the irreverent jester that displeases him. I will say to him, 'Faster, behold an erring child, who seeks to return to thee.' I had no tongue, no means of communicating with heaven; and I have sought to dissipate the clouds which darkened my mind, that I might experience neither doubt nor hesitation when prostrating myself at thy feet! While resting on the teachings of my childhood, I was lukewarm in my belief; and it is the lukewarm which is vomited from thy mouth." No, no; if I pray to him in this manner, God will not repulse me from his bosom. To remain in my old faith, would be to rest estranged from God all my life. To seek the truth elsewhere is not to sever my relations towards him; it is, on the contrary, to seek to identify myself more completely with his essence.

Reassured by this soliloquy, the notary set out for the neighbouring town, in which the St. Simonians had just established a mission. Throughout the whole country nothing was talked of but these preachers without a surplus, and Mr. Tessier, trusting to public opinion, thought he had found what he sought. "Here are theologians," he said, "who will reply to all my questions;" and thereupon he proceeded to demand an audience of them, which he easily obtained. The first ques-

tion turned upon the Bible; to which the missionaries only replied that they would talk of that afterwards. He next inquired of them what was their opinion about God and the human soul, but he still received no precise answer. Mr. Tessier, who wished his doubts removed, returned home with still more harassing doubts than those which had previously tormented him. He was anxious to have the miracles of the Gospel, the hidden sense of the Christian mysteries, the purpose of the Sacraments, explained: but about none of these could he get any explanation. "Oh!" exclaimed he, "that is not the religion of common sense, but a philosophical system, and nothing more. It purposes to unite men to men, while I want a religion which unites men to God. It is thus, I imagine, that every one understands the matter. When the union with God really takes place, the union with our neighbour will not be long in following. I see neither the beginning nor the end of this religion. The beginning, in my eyes, of all religion ought to be a clear and precise notion of the divinity, such as the understanding can receive; the end, a clear idea of the human soul, and of its future destination. I do not wish it imprisoned in this life alone. This life has no doubt been given us in order that we may be useful to our brethren, and it is only in this manner that we can attain to the other; but I require other guarantees than those given me by these gentlemen. They talk of the revelation of St. Simon, but this revelation is only an additional mystery to me, and is very far from explaining the others! I do not speak of their attacks on property; but it appears to me, as far as I am capable of judging, that a father will have but little courage to labour, when he knows that the fruit of his toils will not descend to his son. I believe that this would be to destroy all emulation. In the second place, who is to recompense every one according to his works? I believe that will only take place in heaven, because it is an all-wise and all-merciful God who shall judge us there. On earth, it is men who assume this office; and I am far from believing that the scales of the balance, when held by men, are always equal. Let whoever likes become a Socialist, I at least shall not be tempted to enter their communion." So saying, Mr. Tessier bent his way back to his little village, in despair of finding any one to reply to his questions, since the St. Simonians had failed to do so. He longed to find some one capable of discussing with him the three religions, none of which he could adopt. But as such a person was not easily to be found, he began to feel a sort of remorse, which whispered to him that he had perhaps somewhat too rashly rejected matters with which he was but imperfectly acquainted. But where was he to light upon a worthy man, at once a sincere Christian, an impartial critic, and a ju-

icious philosopher, and that, too, without being either Roman Catholic, Protestant, or Socialist. For the notary saw no possibility of entering the Christian church but through one of these three gates.

He had a neighbour called Mr. Lanoue, who held the same place in the estimation of the learned world of the neighbourhood that Mr. Tessier enjoyed in the little town. He was a profound scholar; but he had latterly neglected natural science, history, and literature, to which he had in his earlier years paid much attention, and devoted all his time to the more interesting study of religion. He spent a part of the summer every year in a country-seat adjoining the little town where our notary lived, and here, as elsewhere, the principal pursuit of his life was the study of the most suitable and excellent means of instructing youth. He took pleasure in giving a gratuitous education to some children in the neighbourhood, and in a short time he rendered his pupils capable of conducting, so to speak, their own education. Mr. Lanoue believed that the principal point was to make the pupil love the branch of knowledge which you wish to teach him, and this once accomplished, that the master has only to give precise and clear replies to the questions of the child.

Mr. Tessier had a son twelve years old, a lad of great promise, whom Mr. Lanoue had taken under his charge. The notary soon perceived by the progress his son made, how great was the capacity for instruction, and how profound and solid the learning of the philosopher. This method of instructing by simple and precise answers, delighted him, and his joy and surprise were at their height when he was informed that, with all his learning, Mr. Lanoue was a sincere believer in the truths of Christianity. He was called by some an innovator, while others even declared him to be one of the Illuminati; but Mr. Tessier was too indifferent to all denominations to shut his eyes to truth, no matter from what quarter it might come. "If this man teach the truth," said he, "why should I regard the calumny of parties, or the insulting nick-names of bigots? When every one is in error, the truth must necessarily appear to them strange and new; the title of innovator is therefore one of honour, instead of insult. If he be filled with divine light, then I envy his lot, and I do not see why he is to be blamed. We must not judge by mere appearances: to listen to hearsay and scandal is the way to remain for ever blind to the truth, while to approach the truth with minds filled with prejudice is sufficient to conceal it from our eyes. As for me, I should not hesitate for a moment to seek for instruction from a Quaker or a Moravian; why should I, then, fear to seek it from my neighbour? I recollect having read in the Psalms of David, that our hearts must be illuminated;

and St. Paul somewhere or other recommends the early faithful not to be children in intellect, but full-grown men."

From this moment, Mr. Tessier could enjoy no repose. Constantly filled with the idea that there was one near him who could dissipate his doubts, and procure him that peace of soul for which he so ardently sighed, he could no longer refrain from opening his heart to this man who, it seemed, so well knew how to heal secret wounds. The tuition of his child furnished him with a ready pretext for a visit, and he set out for the house of the generous tutor of his son, to request him to become his own.

"It is not merely a feeling of gratitude, sir," he said, "which brings me here; but, also, an ardent desire of obtaining from you some information on subjects which concern the whole happiness of my life. You behold in me a man sincerely inclined to religion, and yet everything I hear or see tends to drive me from it. I feel a constant struggle going on between my heart, which wishes to love, and a something in my mind, which refuses to believe. Could you, Mr. Lanoue, restore my mind to peace, and throw some light on a host of mysteries which beset it? The half of my life has been passed in destroying the hold of religion on my heart, and I am afraid of uselessly consuming the second half in vain attempts to re-establish it there.

Mr. Lanoue.—True religion is in the heart of every man who believes in Jesus Christ, and endeavours to fulfil the precepts of the Gospel. It seems to me, therefore, that it is not so difficult to arrive at it.

Mr. Tessier.—But I have other questions still to be answered. Why do we require a religion? Why do we require a God, if it is only to repeat that which simple morality had already taught us?

Mr. Lanoue.—A religion is necessary to unite man to God. Jesus Christ came not only to repeat, but to sanction by divine authority, that which simple morality taught indeed, but taught without any guarantee for the truth of its teachings.

Mr. Tessier.—Very well. But why unite that which was already united of itself by nature? Why have we a God who became man? What necessity have we for miracles and mysteries? When I am told that it is night, I have only to open my eyes and satisfy myself of the fact. Why can I not as easily be assured of the excellence of moral truth? Listen to me, my good sir; I have a thousand times endeavoured to find a reasonable motive for all these divine institutions, but without success. Religion is simply a sort of human police, to which a pretended divine authority is given; and, between ourselves, no one can convince me of the contrary. Seek for the truth in India, and you will be told that the Brahmins are its only

depositories. Search for it at the Vatican, and you will be referred to the Pope. Others again tell you the truth is contained in books written two or three thousand years ago, in a tongue understood by theologians alone; from this it follows that the people, who are unprovided with books, are never to know it, and this directly attacks the divine justice. I can never believe that salvation depends upon a book. We have the great book of Nature, which is worth more than all the rest put together, and it is in it alone, in my opinion, that we must search for the truth.

Mr. Lanoue.—This book has given birth to thousands of others, which are not more intelligible than those of the theologians. The Preacher informs us that the world has been ever given up to the disputes of philosophers. Besides, physical nature has nothing in common with moral truth. I only behold in nature a struggle of elements among themselves—an eternal war between animals of different classes.

Mr. Tessier.—Well, then, it is in my heart that I ought to find my law written; if it be not engraved there by the author of Nature the institutions of men will do nothing for me. My heart informs me of my duties; religion only apprizes me of mysteries which have nothing to do with reason and conscience. Tell me how it is that the apparatus of religion is so complicated and so fantastic, whilst the natural law is so simple.

Mr. Lanoue.—If you will have the goodness to grant me your entire attention for a short time, I am persuaded that you will soon think very differently on this subject. Your questions would lead us too far at present; allow me, in my turn, to propose one to you. Your uncertainty, perhaps, arises simply from your never having reflected sufficiently on the matter. Every man who lives alone has his prejudices, under the influence of which he persuades himself that he alone sees clearly, and that everybody else is mad.

Mr. Tessier.—I have almost the opposite defect. The majority of men wish to impose their opinions on others; they are usurpers, who only maintain their posts by means of reasonings which are always disputed; whilst I prefer receiving the opinions of any man capable of instructing me. That suits my indolence. Instead of lodging others in my miserable hut, I find it more convenient to install myself in their spacious palace of truth. I have therefore all my life been seeking after the truth, ready to receive it as soon as it is presented to me; but I have generally met with little else than specious systems or incoherent hypotheses, the probable side of which was turned to the observer, while the improbable was adroitly concealed. I have now given up this search, with an opinion of the human race less favourable than when I commenced.

I fancy that the heart of man, like our terrestrial globe, cannot receive the light on one side without the other's being plunged in darkness. To return to the question. I have several times conversed on this subject with Roman Catholics; but the method which they employed to convince me was always to send me back to universal tradition and authority. No doubt I bow humbly before authority of every kind—I acknowledge the most sincere obedience to it; but I have a proud mind, since I must acknowledge it to you, which always searches out and will have everything explained. I am the most unwearied inquirer in the world, and when authority says to me, "Do not examine," I don't know how it happens, but almost in spite of myself I examine, notwithstanding; and if I find anything absurd and revolting to my reason, since authority gives me no explanation of it, it always remains to me absurd and revolting.

Mr. Lanoue.—Instead of inquiring so much, we ought to love God and our neighbour. This means is a more infallible one than authority.

Mr. Tessier.—So the Gospel says; but side by side with this precept, which is so clear, there are in the same book things which confound me. I should like to avoid seeing them; but when I have once cast my eyes upon them all is over: the precept is forgotten, and the incomprehensible matter is ever before me. What can I do, Mr. Lanoue? Such is my character. It is absolutely necessary for me to be enlightened. I can readily believe that I am not capable of understanding everything, but I can at least understand something; whilst to tighten the rein, without a few words of encouragement to show me the road, makes my mind rear like a restive horse.

Mr. Lanoue.—You are not easily driven, it appears; and yet it is so agreeable to rest with confidence upon a doctrine.

Mr. Tessier.—Very true; but I have no fixed doctrine. Besides, I am convinced, for you must hear my whole confession, that to impose anything whatever on the intellect is the surest means of driving it to insurrection. My principle is, that our understanding cannot find food in that which does not satisfy the reason: I cannot imagine that it was ever the intention of Providence to blind us, and I think that there is some mystery in all this which you must explain to me.

Mr. Lanoue.—According to my principles, faith should be accessible to reason, in order that it may have its seat in man; otherwise, in fact, we should not be blameable for rejecting things which we do not comprehend. In the second place, I think that the understanding should be free, in order that it may guide the human being. If it be not free—if it be subjected to an opinion which it has not itself formed by

means of examination and reflection—man cannot be considered as a responsible agent. The Deity calls man to account for his actions, because He knows that he has the knowledge of good and evil. How do you think that man can be accountable for his thoughts, if he has not likewise the knowledge of truth and falsehood? When we wish to persuade a person of anything, we do not command him to believe; we demonstrate it to him by reasoning, and persuasion does the rest. In a word, there can be no faith in what is incomprehensible. Men may respect, but they never become attached to it. Moral evidence has no connection with authority: proofs are called for, not commands. The heart is truly submissive only when the reason is satisfied. To call on the heart for obedience, without at the same time convincing the mind, is acting contrary to human nature.

Mr. Tessier.—That is my own confession of faith, but you have only heard a part of my disappointment. Disgusted with the ultramontane divines, I came to the resolution of consulting enlightened ministers of the reformed religion. Rome had told me nothing which satisfied me. I had recourse to Geneva. But, in truth, I felt as if an abyss had opened before me when I heard that it is acknowledged by all the synods of this communion, that man is absolutely incapable of discovering the truth in religious matters, and that his salvation consists in believing, without any examination whatever, that he is saved through the sufferings of Jesus Christ.

Mr. Lanoue.—I approve of your conduct in refusing to acquiesce in an absolute and blind faith, which has no support in your understanding. If you be saved through faith in the merits of Jesus Christ, you will be saved for having believed, and not for having acted. Now, this is a palpable absurdity, for actions alone decide the morality of a man.

Mr. Tessier.—True; and the Protestants have been obliged, in order not to contradict themselves, to pronounce that works do nothing for salvation. According to their theologians, good actions are merely civil or moral acts, and are not spiritual, properly so called. Following their theory farther, we can do nothing but evil, because man is sin from head to foot; all that he does of himself is tainted with the original stain, and he has no other resource than to believe, without further reflection, that the Lord came to wash him from his stains; and that by means of this faith, without exerting himself any more than a tree or a rock, he will go straight to Paradise. Why, it makes the blood boil in my veins, only to think of it.

Mr. Lanoue.—I am not astonished that you could not decide on embracing either the religion of Calvin or that of Luther. I deny, like you, with all my strength, that faith alone is sufficient for salvation. Faith is divine truth finding

access to the understanding; but it should also nourish our soul, and, consequently, should offer us an aliment congenial to our nature. You change and overturn the whole current of a man's thoughts and feelings if you say to him: "Believe without thinking, believe without acting, and afterwards you shall participate in the life of the elect." Jesus Christ did not come to wash us from our sins, but to accomplish the act which enables us to wash ourselves. There is no salvation, indeed, without belief; but belief must have an object, and an object is only attained by action. You require your whole soul in order to arrive at God. Man, such as the Protestant conceives him, is a mutilated being. According to him, his weakness is his virtue—the more incapable he is of thinking and acting, the more agreeable he is to God! It is a conception as narrow, in a philosophical point of view, as it is contrary to religion. You indeed required, Mr. Tessier, a guide on your way: none of these systems gave you the means of returning to the sheepfold, and once more hearkening to the voice of the true shepherd.

Mr. Tessier.—But stay, that is not all.

Mr. Lanoue.—Where else can you have gone to procure rest for your troubled soul?

Mr. Tessier.—I have only told you the two thirds of my history. Dissatisfied with both Authority and Reform, I applied to persons whom you perhaps know, and who appeal to reason and justice alone. I mean the disciples of St. Simon, or, as they are generally called, Socialists.

Mr. Lanoue.—What did they tell you?

Mr. Tessier.—They did not answer one of my objections to Christianity. The Old Testament is in their eyes a piece of worn-out tapestry, the figures of which are defaced and useless. The New Testament, they say, contains the revelation of Jesus Christ, and is worthy no doubt of all veneration, but completely superseded, in the onward march of intellect, by the revelation of a learned Frenchman, called St. Simon, who died a few years ago. For them, Christianity no longer exists, although its name still remains; and in that point, I acknowledge that I coincide with them. I have long applied to the Christian religion those words of the Apocalypse: "She is said to live, but she is dead."

Mr. Lanoue.—But the same Apocalypse tells you that, when religion no longer exists on earth, a third dispensation of the divine light shall take place; that a new church, the New Jerusalem—

Mr. Tessier.—Excuse me, Mr. Lanoue, but I have always regarded that mystical city as the abode of the blessed, which is to come when this world shall have been reduced to the nothingness from which it was brought forth.

Mr. Lanoue.—You have considered the subject in a very narrow point of view, my friend. This idea of the nothingness from which everything originally issued, and to which everything is to return, is irreconcilable with the ideas of infinity and eternity which you must have formed of creative power. The New Jerusalem is so plainly a Church, or if you like, a complemental doctrine of Christianity, that the author of the Apocalypse says of it, that it shall be the tabernacle of God among men.

Mr. Tessier.—But can this possibly be the doctrine which I have been seeking for so long! Ah! Mr. Lanoue, what a singular idea! If this new Jerusalem have already descended upon the earth, we must be, without suspecting it, the successors of the spirits judged in the valley of Jehosaphat! And if this were so, we should have cause to rejoice, for we should then have no more reason to fear the end of the world. But I assure you, that a man who should seriously call himself in the present day a citizen of the New Jerusalem, would excite unbounded laughter. I must confess I did not expect this. What extravagant ideas can arise in the human brain! The New Jerusalem of St. John! Can we pronounce the very name without smiling? After having exhausted all possible sects, man has gone to seek one in heaven. It passes all the limits of common sense! How strong must be our faith to believe ourselves already resuscitated!

Mr. Lanoue.—When the Messiah established his Church, the Jews were astonished in the same manner at the poor Christians, who believed themselves the disciples of the King of Glory, expected by all the East. Their King of Glory was a poor Galilean peasant, who was put to the death of the cross. If you form ideas of the New Jerusalem which are inconceivable with reason, it is your own fault. Your expectations are beyond all probability; can you expect the event to be conformable to them? It is as possible that the New Jerusalem, in the economy of the divine wisdom, should not be really a mystical city with twelve gates formed of precious stones, as that the Messiah was not a triumphant earthly king. If a new doctrine were established under this name, would it be a proof of much discernment to form your opinion of it from the name alone, without attentively examining its nature and credibility?

Mr. Tessier.—I confess that I have allowed myself to be carried away by the singularity of the fact. I return to the St. Simonians, and to the idea which they have of the Christianity of our own day: and I must confess I agree with them, Mr. Lanoue, in believing it dead. We are no longer believers from conviction. Where, at the present day, is the religion of the Gospel to be found? I see no traces of Christianity

except among those good people who do not think at all, or among certain obstinate ultramontanists.

Mr. Lanoue.—And even these, Mr. Tessier, complain more loudly than you of the general want of religious feeling; they are anxious to bring back men's minds to those epochs of the middle ages when Catholicism seemed still to enjoy a sort of life, an evident proof that they perceive none at the present day. But what is the worship of these St. Simonians, who think themselves the up-rooters of Catholicism?

Mr. Tessier.—On that point nothing is yet established. Their Eucharist is stated by them to be a communion between men; but it appears to me, that this is almost making a pun on the word. They look on history as marking a real progress accomplished in human nature, and political association as a sort of theocratic government which will place every one according to his capacity, and recompense every capacity according to its works. These are the two things in the profession of their faith which seduced me; but I have since come to the conclusion, that it was not necessary to be a St. Simonian to consider human affairs in this point of view.

Mr. Lanoue.—And you were right in concluding thus. The progress is real, but it has its germ in Christianity alone. That government which professes to act in the name of divine justice is the only one which men should recognise; we should all exert ourselves to promote the establishment of such a one; but this end can only be obtained by sincerely practising the precepts of the gospel. How every one is to receive his proper reward, is a matter which Christian charity shall then be able successfully to decide. We must first endeavour to render men good; when we have accomplished that, the rest is easy. I venture to predict that the Communists will never accomplish their aim; their proud philosophy estranges them from the Bible, and it is in the Bible alone that the spirit of God is to be found. Did not St. Simon make it an accusation against Luther, that he placed the Bible in the hands of the people? By that alone, he has pronounced his own condemnation. His disciples will sooner or later perceive his fault.

Mr. Tessier.—But how are we to explain the temporary success which his disciples have obtained?

Mr. Lanoue.—From the absolute want of all religious ideas and sentiments in the world. As you have well observed, darkness covered the earth, and men, tired of groping their way, ran to welcome any one who presented them with the faintest ray of light. The St. Simonians felt that the world could not remain without God: they saw that with all the perfection to which science had advanced, the heart was left cold and unsatisfied; something whispered to them that one

day or other men would feel the insufficiency of those exact sciences which are so beautiful in their practical applications, and so powerless to satisfy the immortal nature; and they hastened to search for light to console humanity; despoiled of its hopes, they propounded a theory fitted to stir up men's minds, and they proclaimed it, without examining its foundations and without calculating its results.

Mr. Tessier.—I have somewhere or other read, that the Chinese had an oracle which told them that the truth should appear in the west of their empire. They consequently despatched thither an embassy, which, finding its way to India, brought back thence the worship of the god Fo, instead of that of Jesus Christ, which they would have met by advancing farther towards the west. Have not the Socialists acted in something like the same manner?

Mr. Lanoue.—Your comparison is perfectly correct. Just as Palestine lies to the west of China, universal Christianity, in all its beauty and immensity, is at the end of the path into which the St. Simonians entered, but which they too soon grew tired of following. Their first impulsive movement was legitimate, and bears testimony to the general wants of the age in which we live; only the application of it was premature.

Mr. Tessier.—How, Mr. Lanoue? Do you believe that there is at this moment a revival of Christianity in the human mind? Why, I everywhere see the contrary.

Mr. Lanoue.—You may see the contrary in your little neighbourhood, but that is not the whole human race. The human race is awaking to the light of religion, be well assured, although the people who surround you appear to be averse to it. God has not consulted them before he thought fit to enlighten the world. The objections of the incredulous, in past ages, no longer find an echo in the ranks of the educated. Our metaphysical studies, which were formerly purely materialist, proclaim in the present day the doctrines of spiritualism. Our poets blush at the obscene songs which were formerly the fashion; and many of them, even without suspecting it, pay homage to the rising day. A spirit of charity and benevolence is diffused throughout all classes. The sacred volume is printed in such astonishing numbers by Bible societies, that we should not know how to account for this phenomenon, if we did not conclude that this book is to be the instrument of a new dispensation of the divine light, at a third epoch of the regeneration of the human race.

Mr. Tessier.—In fact, it is very astonishing that a book which contains so many revolting things should be given to men for their edification, especially after the sarcasms and attacks hurled against it by the philosophers of the last century.

Mr. Lanoue.—That is a proof that the providence of God ever advances, notwithstanding the petty clamours of party. The irreligious movement which strikes you in the present day does not invalidate this opinion; for, long after the tempest is over, you are aware that the billows still heave and toss: the impulse which they received has not had time to subside. We have arrived at one of those providential epochs when the Divinity puts his hand to his work, which the passions of men had shaken and disturbed. A new religious spirit, it is evident to every impartial man, is springing up from this new-born spirit of liberty which prevails on all sides, and which heralds the freedom of nations. We find an instance of this in modern literature, which has shaken off conventional rules, and now endeavours to speak the language natural to the human heart.

Mr. Tessier.—Short-sighted people do not see the movement given to the machine, because they fix their attention only upon its defects. Thus, what you term the liberation of the people appears to them only a rebellion against all order, because the movement is ill-directed. Your school of literature displays bad taste, because unskilful hands grasp the lyre. Notwithstanding, I see clearly with you that society is in the throes of regeneration.

Mr. Lanoue.—Observe how all-powerful industry has armed the masses against the yoke of despotism. Means of communication between nations are every day becoming more and more perfect. The same thirst for liberty animates them; they display the same repugnance to war: a voice from on high proclaims, as with a trumpet-call, that men are about to unite in one vast brotherhood; and religion, like the mystical city of the latter days, will descend at the same time from heaven, to hallow and bless this union. This religion will not be a new one. Truth is of no age. It is concealed now and then by an eclipse; but when this eclipse is past, and it shines forth once more, it seems to us as if we saw it for the first time. The human heart demands, at the present day, a religion which shall satisfy our good sense and that craving after fraternity, which is striking deeper root among the people—a religion which shall be in harmony with the progress of intelligence, and which shall unite man to God without mystery and without uncertainty. The Socialists have hastened to answer to this call; but they do not supply the heart and reason with sound and nourishing food. They speak of God, it is true, but it is because everything around us speaks of Him; of association, because all begin to unite; of progress, because everything is marching onwards; of ameliorations, because the whole world is looking for them. Their success should not therefore astonish you, since they have been

merely the public echo of that which every one has long felt and believed; but they do not give those guarantees for the truth of their theory which may be justly demanded from them. They have perceived the dawn of human regeneration, but they have not comprehended its origin, its consequences, or its application.

Mr. Tessier.—That is precisely the impression left on me by their harangues; and, although personally a stranger to them, you judge of them much better than myself. But, Mr. Lanoue, shall I find in your doctrine what is wanting in theirs? I doubt it; for I have such a host of objections in my head!

Mr. Lanoue.—You will always find the truth, if you know how to fit yourself for receiving it. It is only he who does not wish to be convinced who is never convinced. You feel, in fact, that when you address anything reasonable to such a man, he hastens to reject it, for fear of having to give it his assent; and by this means, as he obstinately shuts his ears against religious truth, he can never acquiesce in it. Truth does not force us under her yoke; we are so constituted that we are always at liberty to receive or to reject her.

Mr. Tessier.—I do not exactly comprehend you. Explain that to me a little more fully.

Mr. Lanoue.—Before we can give our assent to the truth—before we can approve of it—our character must be in harmony with it. We say yes, when it flatters us; we say no, when it is disagreeable to us. We only adopt what pleases us; and when we are hurt by the truth, we will not listen to it, nor receive it in our hearts. At first we are guilty of wilful falsehood to ourselves; and we end by remaining altogether in error, for want of having studied attentively the means of escaping from it. Do you comprehend me now?

Mr. Tessier.—Oh, as for that, it is not difficult of comprehension. When I make a useful proposition to the municipal council, which does not meet with unanimous acceptance, my antagonists are usually men who will not see the truth because it is opposed to their private interests. They do not need more enlightenment but greater sincerity. Show them, as clear as day, that a thing promotes the public interest, they still deny it obstinately; but it is plain to all who know them that they speak thus because their private interest is threatened. By dint of resolutely shutting their ears to the good reasons you offer them, they become at length incapable of taking an enlarged view of anything: they commence with insincerity, and end with obstinate narrow-mindedness.

Mr. Lanoue.—So, Mr. Tessier, if you are sincere, you grant that you will not hesitate to acknowledge the truth. Your members of council, whom private interest prevents from considering the common good of the parish, furnish an illustration

of those sceptics who oppose a reform which is antagonistic to their passions. The comparison, I hope, is not far-fetched.

Mr. Tessier.—Your observation is so just that I do not think it possible for a man who is a slave to unhallowed passions, to have his conscience in a fit state to yield to the truths of religion. As for me, I frankly acknowledge that whenever I give way to temptation I hear a voice in my heart which whispers, "Lay aside your religion and your scruples." I was never less inclined to religion than when I was sinning; and, on the contrary, when I was fired by a love of virtue, I felt myself better, and was at the same time more inclined to believe. The more I loved, the more I was enlightened. Ah! Mr. Lanoue, what a pure and tranquil soul men must have before they can listen, in the depth of their conscience, to the timid voice of truth. I have made the experiment, and I know that the impure soul dislikes everything which opposes its ruling passion. To speak of religion to a man of this stamp is like speaking of sobriety to a drunkard. In short, every one receives the truth just in proportion as he is good and pure.

Mr. Lanoue.—You must confess, then, that the only means of receiving the truth presented to us, is to deny one's self, to renounce the prejudices of the society in which we move, and root out from our heart that shame which every one feels in acknowledging his error. If we would be able to say, "That is, indeed, the truth," we must lay aside all the pretensions of self-love, all obstinacy. He who boasts of being a sceptic will find it difficult to confess that he has deceived himself; he who will not correct his vices will feel it harder still to yield to the evidence of a religion which proscribes them.

Mr. Tessier.—Your reflections are not applicable merely to sceptics; they concern also the majority, who care very little about a new truth which is ruinous to their hopes, and attach themselves to their old error when it favours their interests. When St. Paul came to preach the true God to the Ephesians, the workmen who gained a livelihood by selling statues of the goddess Diana of Ephesus, stirred up the people against him. In vain the truth flowed from the lips of St. Paul; they would not receive it. In fact, Mr. Lanoue, he who makes a trade of an accredited opinion considers it as an instrument for earning his bread or of gaining himself consideration; if you try to prove to him that this opinion is an error, you will find no possibility of convincing him. Give men a religion which agrees with their interests, and see how they will hasten to proclaim it, how ridiculous soever it may be! Present them, on the contrary, with a worship which exacts sacrifices from them, and they will avoid you as they would the plague; they will calumniate you, they will treat you as an atheist,

they will invent every slander to destroy your reputation. Those people are farther removed from the religion of common sense than libertines themselves.

Mr. Lanoue.—As you do not belong to those two categories, I am quite disposed to listen to your objections; but I am, at this moment, too much occupied by business to prolong our conversation, so that, if you please, we shall defer this topic till our next interview.

Mr. Tessier, delighted to find the man whom he had so long sought, withdrew full of joy, in the firm assurance of one day seeing the clouds dissipated which had hitherto bounded the horizon of his intellect.

SECOND CONVERSATION.

NO VIRTUE WITHOUT RELIGION.

THE man who has been long tortured by despairing doubt can alone form an idea of the impatience with which the notary counted the days, until he thought he could return to Mr. Lanoue without appearing too importunate. "I expected you sooner, Mr. Tessier," said the philosopher to him, "and if my explanations had been as acceptable to you as your candour and your ardent love of liberty were to me, you would not have so long delayed your visit."

Mr. Tessier.—Oh! Mr. Lanoue, you set me quite at my ease. The fear of displeasing you, by intruding on your precious moments, alone —

Mr. Lanoue.—Intruding, Mr. Tessier! if I render you a trifling service, you do me a greater one still; you give me the opportunity of making you, in the end, a man capable of instructing others in his turn; and if the Deity has placed us upon the earth to do good, good of that kind is above all others. But let us not lose our precious time in superfluous discourse; if you wish, we shall enter at once on the matter. You cannot, you say, be a Christian, unless the objections that you have to make be removed. Produce them, then.

Mr. Tessier.—In the first place then, I am, I hope, an honest man; I do harm to no one, I do not slander my neighbour, I do him good when I can. Thus, since I am naturally virtuous, what need have I of religion? Since I do good without religion, I see no necessity for filling my brain with mysteries which cloud it, with things incomprehensible and often even absurd, which make my reason revolt, and render me incredulous whenever I allow my attention to rest upon them. How many times have I not gone to church a firm believer, and returned shaken in my faith? I will tell you more: it is said that the Bible is the word of God himself. Well, frequently, touched

by the love of God and my neighbour I have opened the Sacred Volume to fortify my faith, and I have thrown it from me, more disheartened than ever.

Mr. Lanoue.—We will presently come to those things which are so repugnant to your reason. I shall commence by proving to you that you are greatly in error in saying that you can be virtuous, or inclined to justice and charity, without the aid of religion. You may do good, I acknowledge, but in all your actions there will perhaps be a secret reference to self, destructive of their purity. I can readily suppose you to act benevolently, but it may be chiefly in order to acquire the reputation of being a charitable man. You may be just, only because you would believe yourself dishonoured if it were said that you were unjust. In a word, if you do not openly take pleasure in evil, it is not perhaps because evil is distasteful to you. Search your conscience, Mr. Tessier. What says it?

Mr. Tessier.—I grant that, so far as I myself am concerned, my motive of action is not the pursuit of Goodness, as you understand it.

Mr. Lanoue.—If men believed you pious from your outward conduct, while internally you were not really so, would you come to me and boast of your piety?

Mr. Tessier.—No, certainly.

Mr. Lanoue.—Take care that it be not so with respect to those virtues of which you were speaking. If, for example, you be a good citizen in order to acquire consideration, and if you bear impatiently the annoyances which this title sometimes brings with it, are you really a good citizen? If you keep your word, for fear it should be said that Mr. Tessier had the meanness to break his promise, when at the same time in the bottom of your heart you desire to do so, are you really an upright man? All your purely outward virtues are stained with selfish motives. The world is full of people who believe themselves virtuous, simply because they do good; but this is a depth of blindness which can scarcely be conceived. Examine this good carefully, and you will see something in it which has reference to self in one way or other. At first sight it appears to be pure, but try it, and you will find that it is spurious. It is not the act, therefore, but the motive, which is the test of virtue. If, in acting, you have only yourself in view, there is properly speaking no virtue; self is the end and object of your exertions, the public advantage is only the pretext.

Mr. Tessier.—Your definition is a ray of light to me. A man who dispenses alms in order to be seen and admired is not charitable from virtue, but from self-interest: his pretended benevolence is infamous hypocrisy, although the action is the same as if it were performed from real charity.

Political events have always proved to me the truth of your observation. Men are ever devoted to that government on which their place or their fortune depends. Outwardly, they appear to love their country; but it is really their own interest that they prefer. Have you ever found in politics many free or disinterested men? No; almost invariably we defend what is advantageous to us, we attack what is injurious to us. When people say: "My opinion is so-and-so," we should substitute for this phrase: "My interest is so-and-so." I do not believe, sir, that there is a single man really impartial in any matter which touches himself. He will always approve of that by which he gains, and censure that by which he loses; and to cloak his selfishness with a pretext, he always takes care to speak of the public good when he means his own. But, although the majority of men are of this character, you cannot deny that there are others naturally good; men who are capable of doing good, even when their interests suffer by it.

Mr. Lanoue.—No doubt there are some who are *capable* of doing so, but that very expression proves to you that they are not naturally inclined to it. They are not good by nature, for if they were, they would have no merit in doing good. On the contrary, what is natural is to love one's self, to the exclusion of others; and that is the reason why we look on those as fearless and intrepid who are able to guard themselves from this tendency. To speak of forgetting one's own interest necessarily supposes the existence of this interest. Self is the first sentiment implanted in the human heart, goodness only comes afterwards. It is as clear as the day.

Mr. Tessier.—That is certainly true, as regards the great majority of people whom I know. However, I must maintain that goodness is the primitive condition of man; I think that we owe all our vices to our social relations.

Mr. Lanoue.—That is the error of Rousseau and of his pupil Lamanon. The latter asserted that the savages are better than we are, and he was massacred and indeed eaten by them. The uncivilised man is a degraded man; he is on the lowest step of the social ladder, and is almost always cruel, ferocious, and shameless. The civilised man, restrained by human laws, is obliged to subdue these propensities; courtesy obliges him to appear the friend of truth and justice; but these artificial curbs are the only cause of his vices. Restrained by force, he secretly chafes, like a lion growling while he obeys his keeper's voice. Could he free himself from the restraints of the law, and leave it to weigh upon others alone, he would do it to-morrow. Politeness, on the other hand, obliges him to feign what he does not feel: it is a whole tissue of falsehood, a continual interchange of hateful dissimulation; and

men revenge themselves afterwards by slander for the constraint laid upon them in public. This is why our social state is the source of so many vices. If we were all good, there would be neither oppressors nor oppressed, consequently there would be no need for laws. Hypocrisy being henceforth useless, since we should be naturally inclined to good, politeness would be converted into benevolence.

Mr. Tessier.—I must acknowledge with you that constraint and dissimulation are the origin of all the vices of society. Every one prefers himself to the rest of the world, that is clear. The law forces me to sacrifice my tastes to the interests of others, and I make this sacrifice reluctantly. Civility teaches me to dissemble the partiality which I have for myself, and the indifference which I feel towards others; but with all that, I am a knave. If I am rich, I am delighted that there are laws to protect my property and to allow me to dine at my ease; if I am poor, I execrate the same laws which force me to content myself with the crumbs that fall from the rich man's table. I am kept in my condition by force alone. It is quite evident that our social condition is the cause of all this. Man, in the mass, is worth nothing; it is man in a state of nature who is good.

Mr. Lanoue.—You conclude that man is naturally good, because social restraints render him worse than he originally was; but that is not reasoning, it is merely asserting what is still to be proved. Just point me out the moment in a man's life when he commences to be depraved. The very first inclinations which he manifests have himself for their object. The law prevents him from carrying into action this selfishness which governs him, it succeeds in making a hypocrite of him; but people only become hypocrites because they have some evil to conceal. The curb makes the liar; without this curb, the liar would have been simply and naturally wicked. It is so plain that one must be wholly devoid of reason to deny it. Give a child up to his inclinations, and you will see to what they will lead him.

Mr. Tessier.—Bless me! you overturn all my previous ideas! There are, no doubt, children born with unfortunate inclinations; but do you mean to tell me that all men are born so?

Mr. Lanoue.—Yes, my friend, I repeat it, and I will prove it; and no argument can convince me of the contrary.

Mr. Tessier.—I conceive you grossly exaggerate the case; and as it may help to explain what I mean, you will permit me perhaps to adduce myself as an example. I do not pretend to be a saint, but I love virtue and detest vice of every kind. I am so constituted—for I do not recollect the time when I did not love the Good and Beautiful. It was born

with me; it is my life itself: in fact, it is my natural disposition. I cannot see my neighbour suffer without suffering myself. If I read a heroic act in history, I long to have been the author of it. I sometimes go to the theatre, and I always shed tears at the sight of persecuted virtue. I am the defender of weakness, and the enemy of every species of oppression. I am therefore naturally good; for where could I have learned this? I hope you are silenced.

Mr. Lanoue.—You are the avenger of innocence when oppressed by another; but if you were in the oppressor's place, your conduct might be different. The oppressor is a man inclined by his passions to injustice; and you, an unconcerned witness, who have suffered nothing, espouse the cause of the weak. But how is your interest concerned here? How can you know that you are not a tyrant yourself, since it is self-interest that makes us tyrants, and you have no interest here? You see the affair occur before your eyes, and you are on the side of justice. You conclude from this that you are good, whereas I conclude from it that you are not sorry, in the first place, to show yourself equitable; and secondly, that, as you are naturally envious and jealous, you will always feel somewhat gratified by the humiliation of those more powerful than yourself. You often dislike a man, not so much for his conduct as because he outshines you in title or fortune. Were some disagreeable accident to happen to one of the great ones of this world, you would perhaps feel no regret at it. We appear to love and protect our inferiors, but we detest our superiors. Your pride is flattered when you appear as the champion of the weak, while it rebels against the patronage of the great. A regard for politeness may make you humble and subservient to them, while all the time you are indulging in the bitterest satire against them in private. Your lofty indignation arises more from humbled pride than from outraged virtue. It is the same thing when you read history. You admire a trait of heroism, whispering to yourself at the same time, "How delighted I should be to play a similar part!" When you see innocence persecuted on the boards of a theatre, you feel as you do when you read of its being insulted in a tale or play; it in no way concerns you. But let your personal interest be at stake, and you will see how differently you will think! Self-interest is your ruling passion: it is your whole being. This virtue of which you boast to me will yield before the slightest check which your interest suffers; it is your intellect which approves, not your heart. You think yourself generous, because you are in a position in which you are not influenced by your passions. I fully admit that you can then see things as they are. I have never advocated any other view. But I maintain that it is great simplicity to believe ourselves

virtuous because we hate injustice in others, for this is no proof that we are incapable of it ourselves. Place the most rigid censor in the situation of the unjust man, and he will very often commit the same actions.

Mr. Tessier.—And yet the intellect is naturally virtuous, since it does homage to the good as soon as it perceives it.

Mr. Lanoue.—But it is the will, not the intellect, which is paramount in man. To see without acting is not being good. Action is everything, because it supposes that the intellect has perceived what is right, and that the will has performed it. But this same understanding, nevertheless, is at the outset plunged in utter darkness, and it does not naturally know what is good. Before a child is at the age to comprehend your teaching, he will laugh quite as readily at the sight of affliction as of joy. When you teach him what virtue is, he is delighted to find others exhibit it towards him, and will imagine that he possesses it himself. Thus a man is virtuous in his study or at the theatre, because he is not an interested party. Had the word disinterestedness never been sounded in his ears, you may be certain that he would never have invented it. If he sincerely admires heroism and innocence in a book or at the theatre, he acts according to the lessons he has received, which have taught him what these virtues signify. These lessons are the first beginnings of a reform, and here I quite agree with you. When the reform begins, God, who has hitherto been absent from our heart, descends into it, and it is He who inspires us with holy enthusiasm and noble thoughts. Does not the man who admires the beautiful and the good find himself, in fact, quite another being? He is modified by the divine influence, which takes the place of the base inclinations of his nature. He is elevated to a superior region, a proof that his own is beneath. That is surely plain enough.

Mr. Tessier.—That is all true, but I cannot yet abandon the field to you. I grant that I am theoretically good, or good without making any sacrifice, when I read of virtue or when I go to the theatre; but if in passing through the street I see a man faint away, I instantly fly to his assistance. If I see a child beaten by young rascals of his own age, I fly to defend him. If a man falls into the water, I plunge in after him to save him, without calculating the risk I run, and in so doing am I not naturally good?

Mr. Lanoue.—There is no real goodness which does not presuppose a choice. To be truly good I must be so in despite of an inward inclination which turns me aside. It is then alone that my action belongs to me; I am then good by character. If I be good in any other way, it is by instinct.

Mr. Tessier.—But instinct and nature are the same thing. If I am good by instinct, I am so by nature also.

Mr. Lanoue.—But are your actions the result of instinct or reflection?

Mr. Tessier.—Of reflection, no doubt: that is the noblest prerogative of man. What is involuntary cannot be meritorious.

Mr. Lanoue.—So, when you make use of your prerogative, you are inclined to what is evil. You are disposed to good only when you are driven to it by instinct, like a machine. What do you think of such goodness? What reason have you to be vainglorious of it? What merit have you in following it? You condemn yourself in saying that your goodness is involuntary.

Mr. Tessier.—But it is goodness, nevertheless.

Mr. Lanoue.—Well, if so, this goodness belongs to God and not to you. In order to preserve the work of his hands, God has implanted in all beings whatsoever, together with self-love, an instinct which leads them involuntarily, as you well observe, to aid everything that suffers. This sentiment sinks into the heart of a woman, who becomes through it devoted to her child, though she may be disposed, notwithstanding, to do all possible harm to others. In acting so, she obeys a law of Nature. Providence has made this instinct so powerful for the preservation of the race, that we often see women in whom maternal love ceases when the child has less need of her anxious care. But this is not the ordinary condition of man: it is only accidentally that he finds himself in this position. His every-day relations to his fellow-men bring him back to his own nature. His life is not spent in beholding spectacles such as those which you adduce, but in events which spring from his virtues or his passions. In these alone man really becomes an actor, and, as such, he is at once tempted and restrained. In that alternative, he is always more inclined to the evil than the good. If we had to choose between ourselves and our neighbour —

Mr. Tessier.—The scale would evidently turn in our own favour. I see that you are right. Are there not persons who allow their selfish passions to overpower even this strong instinctive feeling? They fly from the wretch who is drowning, in place of saving him and offering him an asylum after his shipwreck. Oh, the monsters! And then those women who refuse to suckle their own children, from affectation or indolence! An instinctive love of good may be involuntary, but the love of self is so strong, that there are degraded beings who will not receive it. You have convinced me, Mr. Lanoue, that the instinct of courage or generosity is not a virtue, properly speaking: it is an impulse which for a

moment actuates us without changing our nature. Our will is not the less selfish on that account; and the wicked man, after having hastened, as I have said, to the assistance of a dying wretch, may plunge his poniard in the heart of another on the slightest temptation.

Mr. Lanoue.—We must attribute to this powerful feeling of instinct also that charm which attaches us to children. It is not, as the philosophers have asserted, because they are innocent, *non nocentes*, that we love them; for they sometimes deserve our affection much less than grown-up persons, who yet do not inspire us with the same interest. The intention of Providence in implanting this instinct in our breast was to place infancy under the safeguard of age. Our conduct is not the result of reflection; it is simply a natural instinct which the Deity has inspired us with, without our consciousness, for the preservation of the species. If we were actuated by the slightest idea of justice in yielding to this undefinable attraction, if we were interested in children according to their dispositions, we should give a whipping to the naughty ones, and comfits to those who amend their faults. But it is not so: our affection has nothing in it that resembles justice. We laugh at the pranks in them which we afterwards deplore; nor can such tricks wean us from our partiality, for the present.

Mr. Tessier.—Undoubtedly. Our attachment is certainly blind; it has no feature which stamps it as the privilege of a reasonable being; and, consequently, cannot be regarded as a virtue. It is the will of God to implant in us a peculiar influence, just as he diffuses the sap through the tree. This influence does not depend on our free choice; it is a law of nature to which we are subjected, and is not even our ordinary state. When reflection returns, we always return to self. Selfishness is our natural condition; but that does not prevent the eternal laws from acting upon us, at times, in a contrary sense. If this impulse was always in harmony with our ruling passion, we should be always good; but our ruling passion ever prompts to selfishness. Oh, Mr. Lanoue, could I have ever imagined that I should come to consider human nature in this light? I fear that I shall sink into the slough of despondency. What! can it be that I am doomed to live among such people?—men who have no God but themselves, who are virtuous only when the law forces them to be so, or when politeness fashions them to falsehood! How discouraging is this reflection!

Mr. Lanoue.—The horizon will soon clear up. Let us pause for a moment, to consider this instinctive feeling which leads us to fly to the aid of the suffering. To say that in this case you are the author of your goodness, would be the same as saying that you are the cause of your bodily health. There

is, certainly, a state of health which depends upon yourself ; but there is another, that results from the regular play of the machine, which operates independently of you. Moral goodness is closely analogous : there is one species of it which it is in your power to practise, but there is another which the great Author of your being implants in his creatures, who obey it occasionally, from blind impulse, and not continually, from reflection. But the goodness which depends on yourself is that which now occupies our attention ; and I assert and maintain that you do not practise this naturally, but, on the contrary, that it is opposed to your propensities. Your body and soul belong to God : that is incontestable. He modifies them therefore as he pleases ; and in your present state, in order that you may not be a simple automaton, he gives you the free government of yourself ; and, to enable you to exercise this command, he places at your disposal certain parts of the human body which must obey your will, within certain limits which he has fixed to your being. This body, of which, in certain cases, you are the master, is not always under your control. You can stretch forth your arm to seize or give an object, but it is not in your power to use this arm except for the purposes for which it was designed ; it is a machine which has its use, and which, beyond that use, does not belong to you. It is so also with your spiritual being. There is one use made of it by the Deity, and this you cannot change : but in the use which you yourself are permitted to make of it, you are free. If you turn this latter use to good, you are really good ; but I challenge you to find one man who is born naturally in this goodness : to believe in virtue of this kind would be absolute folly.

Mr. Tessier.—Nothing can be more true. But observe where I erred ; I took this instinctive prompting of goodness for the voice of conscience.

Mr. Lanoue.—Goodness must be acquired like science. Conscience is not innate : it is formed in man by education and example. But, prior to the formation of this conscience, the inclinations are naturally evil. It is the vainest dream of the sentimental philosophy of the followers of Rousseau, to appeal to conscience as an absolute test of the good and beautiful. Many a savage would devour his father, conscientiously, and consequently without remorse. Conscience is formed in man according to the religion in which he is instructed ; it assumes the impress of that which is taught it, and which it is told to practise : and, in conscience thus formed, spiritual life has its seat. But to say that conscience is co-existent with man, is to say that the web is made as soon as the spider. Let us abandon this senseless doctrine of innate ideas, which do not deserve refutation. We are born without conscience,

as without garments. When the conscience is well directed, man is virtuous—I admit it in the fullest extent; but it is because he then reforms. No other propensity, therefore, is born with us but that of self-preservation. This instinct we seek to satisfy at any price, and we can only repress it at our own expense, and when commanded to do so by others; otherwise, we should increase in strength and vice at the same time. To the gluttony of childhood would succeed the libertine career of youth; mature age would follow, steeped to the lips in that ambition which would grasp all for itself; and age would close the race, feebly endeavouring to retain all, because all is escaping its clutch.

Mr. Tessier.—That is, indeed, a true portrait of human life. I am delighted to find that you are a spiritualist without being a partisan of innate ideas, a notion which I have always rejected. An idea is a comparison made between two sensations; and it is the greatest folly in the world to say that this comparison, which is the result of attention and reflection, can be born with us. If your religion be only as rational as your philosophy, I shall acknowledge it without hesitation. However, as it is from the doctrine of innate ideas that the most convincing proofs, at least in appearance, of the immortality of the soul are borrowed, I fear lest your theory may place this belief in jeopardy.

Mr. Lanoue.—Suppose ideas to be the result of comparing two sensations, then, even if we admit that the being who feels these sensations is material, it would be impossible to assert that the being who compares the feelings is material likewise. This principle, on the contrary, which compares the sensations received, and acts on its own reflection, is the soul. Ideas, however, may still not be innate, and yet not be the result of comparison. According to some, they are spontaneous inspirations; but the matter, after all, is of very little importance. Some day, perhaps, I may give you more sure and convincing proofs of the immateriality of the soul. But, since we are agreed upon all that we have gone over, let us sum up, Mr. Tessier. In the first place, you admit that no action whatever has any real value except in so far as it is performed freely, is the result of reflection, and is done with a good intention.

Mr. Tessier.—Precisely.

Mr. Lanoue.—In a word, that there is no absolute, real good which is not done without reference to ourselves: that we are the instruments of good, and not its object.

Mr. Tessier.—Right again; on that we are agreed. But since this is so evident, I do not see the necessity of embroiling the subject, by adding an additional mystery to it: in fact, I do not understand what religion has to do in the matter.

Mr. Lanoue.—The absolute good to which I referred, in order to be really such, ought to be sincere: it ought not to be simply an action, it must be also an intention. To be perfectly disinterested in our actions, we should be disinterested in heart, and not merely in words.

Mr. Tessier.—That is what no one contradicts.

Mr. Lanoue.—But observe, my dear friend, that religion alone is the judge of the heart. Human laws and customs decide on the actions; but religion enters into the most secret thoughts and intentions. The commandments of God form our only rule of conduct. They forbid us to kill, to commit adultery, to steal, to bear false witness against our neighbour. But if you abstain from these crimes through fear of the laws or of dishonour, if you abstain from them from any human motive whatever and not from religion, you virtually commit them. Although you do not carry them into external action, they smoulder in the depth of your heart, in the form of culpable desires. What man wishes he would accomplish if he could; and because he finds it impossible to attain his ends, from the restraint imposed upon him by his fellow-men, he is not therefore absolved.

Mr. Tessier.—Assuredly, looking at the thing in its true point of view, there is in fact no real virtue in actions which are simply outward; they must be, at the same time, the result of virtuous tendencies. God reads our hearts, he beholds our most secret desires, and if mine are not conformable to equity, I have sinned. It is most true. Jesus Christ tells us, that whoever looketh at a woman to lust after her hath, by that alone, committed adultery with her in his heart. I must therefore conclude with you that there is no virtue without religion. But, instead of this maxim, which seems rather intolerant, I should prefer the following formula: there is no virtue but that which results from a principle internally good.

Mr. Lanoue.—It is in vain that you object; you acknowledge my position in spite of yourself. The external man is judged by his equals; but the internal man, which is the whole man, is accountable only to God. You see, therefore, that men have nothing to do with your virtues.

Mr. Tessier.—In fact, while doing good in appearance, I may cherish evil in my heart, without the knowledge of my fellow-men. I may appear the chastest man in the world, while my secret thoughts may be most sensual and profligate. There is no means of getting rid of your arguments; I acknowledge all that: nevertheless, you have reckoned up the sins prohibited by the decalogue rather summarily. I believe fully that unchaste thoughts are adultery, that cunning and deception are theft, that the refusal to defend our neighbour is equivalent to false testimony against him; but homi-

cide, Mr. Lanoue—can you prove to me that I commit that in secret? There is no crime which inspires me with such horror.

Mr. Lanoue.—If you have ever so far forgotten yourself as to wish evil to your enemy; if you have inwardly rejoiced at his misfortunes; if you have calumniated him in the presence of others; these are so many assassinations of which you are the accomplice. You have wished them in your heart; the action alone was wanting. All your external moderation with regard to him to whom you wish ill, is only a hypocritical farce. To wish evil is to do it. You say that you do not wish the death of your enemy; but you wish to get rid of him—that is the word. The means alone prevent you; but the internal thought has nothing to do with the means. The latter are actions, and the gallows is the reward of murder. Thus, Mr. Tessier, you are, as you said, an honest man without religion. You boast of that privilege. In all your actions, in all your desires, therefore, you are entirely disinterested. When you say that you do good, you never apply any of it to yourself, and you only act for the common welfare —

Mr. Tessier.—Stop, stop, Mr. Lanoue! I ask your pardon for my objection. I see plainly that I spoke without reflection when I had the effrontery to assure you that I was naturally virtuous. To be virtuous, as you understand it, one must be always on one's guard.

Mr. Lanoue.—Yes, we must be on our guard—that is the word. We must deny, we must struggle against ourselves. In fact, religion consists in that alone. It is a divine commandment which tells us to detach ourselves from our individual being, from *self*, to take an interest in the general good, to identify ourselves with the universal *myself*, which alone gives life to everything.

Mr. Tessier.—That principle is, in fact, universal; I shall have something more to say to you about it presently; but, for the moment, I have some difficulty in believing that we ought not to yield ourselves up completely to the good and humane sentiments with which Nature, as it seems to me, has inspired us. What! in order to be virtuous or religious, for now I see plainly that they are synonymous, we must struggle!

Mr. Lanoue.—If we had only quietly to follow our natural instinct, there would be no necessity for being on our guard: we should have merely to swim with the current. Ushered into existence with desires which have reference only to self, thrown into a world of which we make ourselves the centre, and which we esteem in proportion to the enjoyments it can offer us, and by no means with reference to those it can procure for others, if we were to yield to our natural de-

sires without repressing them, we would go so far that it would be at length necessary to set a limit to them.

Mr. Tessier.—You are right: we are born with the desire of appropriating to ourselves whatever pleases us.

Mr. Lanoue.—It is, therefore, absolutely necessary to combat and subdue our inclinations. Inclined by our nature to consult our sole advantage, which is evil, we can only extirpate this evil by acquiring an *aversion* to it. The word explains the thing: aversion is the act of a man who turns away from an object. We desire the evil in our secret thoughts; consequently, if we do not combat it—in a word, if we do not turn away from it—we remain in it, for we are entirely there where our heart is.

Mr. Tessier.—Consequently, morally speaking, we are a mass of sores from head to foot. Our Saviour was indeed well justified in saying: “There is none good but God.” That sentence includes the whole of morality.

Mr. Lanoue.—And in order to heal us a remedy must be found, for evil being our delight——

Mr. Tessier.—Our delight! Oh! that is rather too much.

Mr. Lanoue.—Yes, our delight. The ancients held that revenge was the pleasure of the gods; and natural man, like the gods, finds a charm in revenging himself on his neighbour, consequently in killing him. Many writers of the present day systematically corrupt youth by pictures which disguise the horrors of vice, and thus lead them to love it. Selfish avarice longs for the property of others, and its pleasure is internal theft; it gnashes with feeble rage the bit with which our civil laws restrain it.

Mr. Tessier.—Yes, Mr. Lanoue, we require to make great efforts indeed to free ourselves from those pleasures; effort is in fact the only means of conquering temptation. Thus, after having stifled our first natural desires, which incline us only to self-love, we develop in our hearts another love, which is that of the good of all.

Mr. Lanoue.—That is, no doubt, what religion calls regeneration. We are all born with self-love; religion holds out to us a new life, in which we must be born again, and in this new life we know no love but that of universal good, or, to speak more exactly, the love of God and our neighbour.

Mr. Tessier.—I recollect the words of Jesus Christ to Nicodemus—that we must be born again. Nicodemus inquired, as I should have done myself, how a man can commence the natural life a second time. Your explanation leads me to look at present on the Gospel as a system of regeneration: in a word, as a moral reform, and such a view is very plausible. I now understand clearly, too, those other words of Jesus Christ which so often puzzled and grieved me: “I am not

come to bring peace, but a sword." We have indeed a war to the uttermost to wage against our propensities.

Mr. Lanoue.—We may sum up religion in a few words. Our personal interest prompts us to do everything with reference to ourselves, while the religious life demands that we should labour for the good of others. If we follow our natural intentions, we make ourselves the centre of everything that exists; when we combat our inclinations, we look on ourselves as forming a portion of the great machine of creation, and not as the object for which the machine was created.

Mr. Tessier.—This idea of religion is lofty in the extreme, Mr. Lanoue. According to you, to be religious, one must labour for the common good. The end which God has proposed to us, therefore, is disinterestedness, and the only evil in us is selfishness.

Mr. Lanoue.—You are perfectly right. There is no other evil than the one you have mentioned. This is the Devil, this is Hell—in a word, this is the only vice which separates us from God. When you study the matter a little, you will see, in fact, that selfishness includes all the other vices. It is this vice which renders us slanderers, adulterers, drunkards, coveters or stealers of the property of others, proud and revengeful. Selfishness consists in centring our affections on ourselves, instead of sending them abroad upon our brethren.

Mr. Tessier.—The principles of your moral reformation are delightful. I am no more in favour of selfishness than yourself; and if I make some objections, you will not imagine, I hope, that I am a partisan of the basest propensity in the world. Hear me patiently, then. I am sincere, and I shall not endeavour to make difficulties where none exist. Looking closely at the question, it appears to me, however, that Nature tells us not to neglect ourselves. She has not given us existence, in order that we should mortify ourselves all our lives. We might as well never have been born as sacrifice our existence and combat ourselves incessantly.

Mr. Lanoue.—So the chaste man who abstains from adultery, the temperate man who sacrifices his gluttonous propensities, in short, the man of virtue who combats his passions, are so many senseless martyrs to vain opinion, and the vicious man who gives way to his natural inclinations alone is right! Reflect on that, Mr. Tessier.

Mr. Tessier.—True, that would be very unfortunate; but after all it does not reply to my objection. We must not judge so rigorously here. I am as far as any one from advocating gluttony or any species of sensuality; but you must acknowledge with me that if it be a crime against society, it is not perhaps a crime against Nature, since the latter attaches a pleasurable sensation to these actions. The gourmand, when

satisfying his gluttonous appetite, will tell you that he would not have yielded to the passion which governs him, had not the Deity so organised him that he takes pleasure in it. You see then that such things are hurtful only to society; the Deity, who inclines us to them by an irresistible attraction, is perhaps not so displeased with them as is generally said.

Mr. Lanoue.—The pleasurable sensation attached to all our natural desires proves to you that Providence intended that we should satisfy them. Suppose that man felt repugnance at the sight of food, and only partook of it when urged by reason, it is most probable that he would take little care to procure it, especially if he had to labour for it. The same remark holds good of all our corporeal pleasures: these are all useful; we are only forbidden to abuse them. Marriage is natural, adultery is unnatural; eating is an action which we must perform to preserve our existence, gluttony is the abuse of this action. The man who abuses these functions desires to enjoy the agreeable sensation which Nature has connected with them, without concerning himself about the function itself; but to say that in so doing he obeys the dictates of Nature, is the grossest and most disgusting of sophisms. He insults Nature instead of following her suggestions. Tell me, if the man who vomits up his dinner, like the Cæsars we read of in Suetonius, in order to have the pleasure of taking a second, presents a very attractive spectacle in your eyes?

Mr. Tessier.—Ah! how disgusting! Such a man abuses his existence. It is certain that to gratify the senses, solely for the pleasure we experience in so doing, is to disobey the supreme law. But can the charm attached by Nature to self-love—in a word, to selfishness—be a natural evil, or a divine one, if you like the phrase better?

Mr. Lanoue.—The man who gives way to selfishness resembles, in every respect, the glutton, who allows himself to be led by this passion beyond the legitimate object of eating. There is a pleasure attached to life in general, as well as to each of its acts, in order that we may be, as it were, forced to employ it for another end and object than self. Eating and drinking serve another purpose than the simple actions themselves, and it is the same with selfishness. When restrained within the limits of moderation, and considered as a means of attaining a more noble end, it is permitted, since we must first belong to ourselves, that we may afterwards belong to others. God makes instruments of us, and since for this purpose we must attend to self-preservation, we are always fitted for communication with the external world. If we did not love our person in a certain degree, we should very soon become incapable of being useful. We should forget to nourish our

body and supply it with physical strength, and should neglect our mind, and thus unfit it for enlightening those of others. Nature has inspired us with the love of ourselves, as a guarantee for the preservation of our existence; she has told us to seek happiness and fly from suffering; and in obeying this instinct man preserves the animal machine tolerably well. But in man there is both the animal and the intellectual being. The animal life is not the sole purpose of his being, that is evident; for, if that were man's destiny, when he has eaten, drunk, and continued his species, he has fulfilled his mission on earth.

Mr. Tessier.—Fie! fie! that is the life of a brute. It is said, with justice, that we should eat in order to live, and not live in order to eat. Thus, I comprehend clearly that we have another destination on earth than that of being constantly occupied with ourselves. I see plainly that Nature forces us, as it were, to preserve the animal machine, but it is in order that our intellect may employ it for some end or other.

Mr. Lanoue.—And this employment consists in devoting ourselves to the public good. You see that I only complete your sentence. Personal interest, when made subordinate to a general end, is legitimate, and is then only a prudent economy of life inculcated by religion itself; but, when it has no other object than ourselves, it is selfishness.

Mr. Tessier.—So that it is my duty to take care of myself, in order to preserve my health; it is my duty to guard myself, by clothing, against the inclemency of the seasons; I require to have a comfortable but plain habitation, in order that my mind may not be held in thralldom, from the impossibility of satisfying my most necessary wants; but, when I have all that, then it is my duty to think of others. Ah! that is what I call a well-digested religion, Mr. Lanoue. It is said that charity should begin at home. No doubt of it, in order that we may become, by such means, active workers abroad. If I fall sick through my own fault, there is a man become useless to others; and not only so, but I deprive society of the services of my wife and my nurses, if I have any. Would it not be better to leave all these persons to their usual occupations, and to occupy myself, too, if I can?

Mr. Lanoue.—Add to this, that you must provide not only for your own wants, but also for the necessities of your family, in order that it may be, like yourself, useful for the public good. A family is only an individual on a larger scale, which must account for its talents to society. Nay, more: you must care not only for the wants of the moment, but also for those to come; and in this way, provided you be not actuated by avarice, even a superfluity is legitimate. You see that I give latitude enough to self-love. But I go farther still, and say

that it is not only lawful for you to make provision for the future, but even to increase your fortune, and make yourself by that means more capable of doing good. Be ambitious, Mr. Tessier, the purpose will justify it; be ambitious, in order to be in a position to be charitable, to aid your brethren, to be benevolent—to become, in fact, the image of God on earth.

Mr. Tessier.—I can bear it no longer, Mr. Lanoue; I feel my heart too full for words. But, though conquered, I still see a strong objection which may be brought against us, and to which I beg your careful attention. Selfishness is inherent in a certain degree in human nature. The moment when it ceases to be unlawful, is when it is prejudicial to us as well as to our neighbour. This is a beautiful arrangement of Providence. But why does God wish us to combat the inclinations that he gives us, in order to attain to something better which is the fruit of our own exertions? Philosophy proves, no doubt, that we should devote ourselves to the public good. It demonstrates that private advantage is an infraction of the commonweal; but all that, I fancy, is purely a social compact. I should wish to know how, in becoming selfish, I remove myself from God whilst abandoning the cause of public good: in a word, I should wish that this public good were not a human invention, but, as it were, a divine law. I am told that I offend God by shutting myself up within myself; but is it not more proper to say that I offend society? I perceive very clearly the injury which I inflict on the latter; but, on the contrary hypothesis, I do not see so plainly what harm I can do the Deity. If I withdraw from men, men alone have a right to complain of me. It will be very difficult to convince me that selfishness, which in the beginning is natural to us, becomes in the end a crime. If it becomes such, it is evidently because it is noxious to society, of which I ought to be an active member. I cannot see that it is a sin, properly so called. In what does this concern the Deity? It is he who inspires me with self-love; it is my neighbour who complains of the exercise of it: it is only my neighbour, therefore, whom I wrong.

Mr. Lanoue.—It follows, at least, from what I have just explained to you, that the religion I advocate is founded upon the most perfect knowledge of the human heart, and that it tends to the greatest possible advantage of the human commonwealth. Confess that this is a great point gained.

Mr. Tessier.—I admit it at once; it is the most beautiful moral conception possible, and, in order to guarantee its success, the philosophers who invented it said to men: "It is God who speaks thus to you. Keep within the limits of moderation; by yielding to your inordinate self-love, you are rendering yourself culpable towards God." I do not see that this

reform of the individual has any other aim than the public good. God is not there.

Mr. Lanoue.—The public good, I should imagine, is the general, the universal good; in short, the greatest possible good to the greatest possible number.

Mr. Tessier.—Assuredly.

Mr. Lanoue.—Well, my dear friend, the universal, absolute good—the good, *par excellence*—is God. He is its beginning and end: it does not exist elsewhere. God, in a word, is goodness personified. Exert the utmost powers of your mind, and tell me if you can imagine any other cause than love for the creation of all that does exist. God is love itself, since it is He who has created everything. The entire universe attests the love and wisdom of a Supreme Being—the love which bestowed existence on everything, and the wisdom which regulated and put in order all that love had produced.

Mr. Tessier.—Why, just in the same way Lucretius attributes all that exists to the God of Love. According to him, it is he who rearranged chaos, and drew men towards each other. We are now in the regions of fable; that is not religion.

Mr. Lanoue.—Without being blind, love can do nothing without an end. God is not only love, like the impure divinity of Lucretius, but he is at the same time wisdom. What could be the object of love, if not to act conformably to its essence? But the essence of love is not to love one's self alone, but to love beyond one's self. In creating the universe through love, the Deity wished to send forth life, in order that this life might return to him again. He wished to love, and to be beloved in return. When man, who was made the receptacle of this love in order that he might return it, chooses rather to concentrate it upon himself alone, he is selfish; when, on the contrary, he aids as much as possible in spreading the divine influence which has descended into his heart, by advancing the public good, he becomes a fellow-worker with God himself. In a word, by exclusive selfishness, man isolates himself from men, and still more from God, who has endowed him with love, that he might disseminate it. He injures society, and he is a sinner, in all the rigour of the term, in the sight of God. When, on the contrary, he devotes himself to the public interest, he makes a use of love which is in harmony with its essence, and, consequently, he works for God while working for his fellow-men. You see plainly, then, that my philosophical system, as you please to call it, is also a religion, and of all religions the one most susceptible of rigorous demonstration.

Mr. Tessier.—I cannot dispute it. So long as the definition given by you of the Deity is acknowledged to be true, men will find in religion the most perfect and exact system of phi-

losophy and morality. God being the Good, all that is done with a view to the greatest possible good of the greatest possible number is done for the cause of God.

Mr. Lanoue.—When man is devoted to himself and to his own interests, he belongs neither to God nor to men; he is then, strictly speaking, without morality and without religion. To say that there is no virtue without religion is simply saying that there is no virtue which recognises self, and that all virtue consists in sacrifices made by us, in order to fulfil our obligations towards God and towards man.

Mr. Tessier.—I am dazzled with so much light, Mr. Lanoue! Look you! I have been sometimes told that in order to be virtuous I should do everything from love to God. But seeking God and not finding him, and loving him, as it were, by command and not naturally, all that I did for the love of Him was so little that I was ashamed of it. You tell me now that we must do good for the love of good. Oh! that I can comprehend and even feel! I formerly regarded God as an individual being, and did not well know why I was to do all for him. But you tell me that God is the Good, and there is his essence found in a moment; there I have my duties clearly traced; there I see religion and morality reared on a simple and solid basis. I can no longer be deceived as to the love of God. Inclined to evil as we are, we are all either tigers gnawing the chains which restrain us, or apes counterfeiting virtue without feeling it. Let us substitute religion for human customs and laws, and we become immediately changed. The human species may become as interesting in this point of view as it was hideous in the other. I am no longer tempted to throw myself into the river: you were right in saying that the horizon was about to clear up.

Mr. Lanoue.—As you are now firmly persuaded that there are no natural virtues, and that a man must be religious before he can be honest, you have no need of farther explanations to convert you seriously.

Mr. Tessier.—Allow me for a moment to repeat what we have gone over, if you please, that I may be sure I have understood you. When I examine myself with sincerity, I acknowledge that I am guilty of selfishness. I do not doubt but that other men resemble me in this respect. In order to be virtuous we must curb our self-love; for if every man thought only of himself, then adieu to society. While acting under the restraint of law and education, I may be forced to good actions; but actions outwardly good may proceed from bad motives. To be virtuous, we must have above all an inward check, which not only obliges me to appear good, but to be so in the bottom of our heart; not only to act justly, but to cherish sentiments of justice. Nothing can be more true,

Mr. Lanoue. It is religion alone which goes so far; there is nothing else which makes new men of us. It is in vain that force and politeness are brought to bear on us; the old Adam is always there. Everything done under their influence is forced or pretended. But I do not wish to be religious without being a Christian; and I do not yet see any connection between your fine philosophical system and the Christian religion.

Mr. Lanoue.—The Christian religion is identical with that which I have made known to you. You learn from both that man falls into evil the moment he ceases to combat his vicious inclinations. Both alike teach that man is born thus.

Mr. Tessier.—But a love which is not natural cannot take its rise in us through the divine influence. We ought to be born with the faculty of either abusing the self-love which is given to us for our preservation, or of confining it within legitimate limits. You see that the scales of the balance ought to be equal, and yet they are not so. We are born in the abuse of this faculty; and it is only by the force of lessons and correction that we come to comprehend the necessity of restoring an equilibrium within us. You do not tell me how we are thus born, contrary to order and our inclination. That is an enigma which you have left unsolved.

Mr. Lanoue.—It is here, my friend, that Christianity begins. Christianity inculcates all the facts which you have just shown you so well comprehend; and it teaches us, besides, that man is born in a state of moral degradation since the fall of our first parents. When issuing from the hands of his Maker, man possessed a legitimate self-love; but he has since fallen, by his own fault, into that exclusive selfishness which makes itself its own end and object. Forgetting that life was given him to devote it to the service of others, man has received it only to guard it carefully in his heart; as a miser hoards in his strong box that gold which he received, only that he might circulate it.

Mr. Tessier.—So, then, Adam was selfish; and we, who are his children, are all since that time selfish like our father!

Mr. Lanoue.—That was the entire crime of the first man. That was the origin, and from thence dates the perpetuation of a love so contrary to nature. You say yourself, with no other prompting than your simple good sense, "I know I have evil inclinations which must be combated." You have only, as a good Christian, to translate this language into the following: "I know now the nature of original sin, and it is my duty to extirpate it by following the counsels of religion." You see plainly that our morality and the Bible teach one and the same thing.

Mr. Tessier.—Your observations upon the evil propensities

of man are incontestable. What prevented me from seeing any relation between them and the hereditary stain of which Christianity speaks, is because I regarded original sin as an act of pure disobedience, for which all men who succeeded Adam were punished. That did not appear to me a very benevolent act on the part of a God who is all love. You now show me that our selfish propensities are the consequence of disobeying the divine law. Regarded in this point of view, the matter is satisfactory enough. Our evil nature followed subsequently, as disease follows intemperance.

Mr. Lanoue.—If selfishness be the only thing which removes us at the present day from Good, that is to say from God, for God is Goodness personified: it is the same propensity exactly which in early times led humanity astray. Evil now is the same as it ever was.

Mr. Tessier.—I feel you are right again. The human heart has always been cast in the same mould. It is selfish in France as it is in Japan; it was so six thousand years ago, precisely as it is to-day. But do not imagine that I drop the question there. An individual sin I can admit, but the idea of a hereditary one is totally repugnant to me. In the second place, your theory of the fall of man bears very little resemblance to the account given in Genesis. You see that in order to complete my Christian education, it is not enough that you have replied to the first half of the question which commenced this conversation: you must also reply to the second. I must be set at ease as to the incomprehensible things of the Bible which perplex me; and, to begin with the first, you must explain to me the fall of man. By that alone, Mr. Lanoue, can you give the sanction of Christianity to your system. If your statement be plausible enough, but if at the same time it make the Bible appear absurd, I warn you that your labour will be lost. I have great confidence in you, but still more in the Bible. Bring your system, therefore, into harmony with it; otherwise, my conversion is as far off as ever. I promise you that I shall yield at once, if you succeed in explaining to me the fall of Adam as clearly as you have proved to me that there is no virtue without religion.

Mr. Lanoue.—The manner in which this first problem has been solved should give you some hope that the other may be so likewise. Observe how far we have already advanced, and what a distance there is between your first question and the *résumé* which you have now made. But the explanations which you request from me would lead us too far for the present; and we shall therefore resume this conversation another day, if you please, at the point where we have dropped it.

At these words, Mr. Lanoue bowed, and the notary, taking the hint, rose to withdraw, saying that he would soon return, as he was most anxious to know how the fruit eaten by Adam and Eve could possibly damn them, as well as all their posterity, and that, too, without involving any injustice. He accompanied these words with a most ominous shake of the head; and the philosopher could easily observe that he had to do with a man who was not yet at the end of his doubts.

THIRD CONVERSATION.

THE FALL OF MAN.—THE LAWS OF TRANSMISSION.

A FEW days afterwards, the notary called on Mr. Lanoue, and, burning to resume the conversation, abruptly addressed him: "Come," said he, "to the question. You have proved to me as clear as the day, that there are no natural and spontaneous virtues. Nevertheless, all your arguments, however conclusive they may be, are human, and must therefore be confirmed by the Bible; for the Bible is, as I cannot doubt, the Word of God himself.

Mr. Lanoue.—You do not doubt, you say, that the Scripture is inspired by God?

Mr. Tessier.—Certainly. Who could have invented such a system of reformation? The fall and re-establishment of man are contained in the Bible, and it must be that God has placed them there; for even supposing that we might have discovered the evil by the exercise of our reason and intellect, there is nothing that could lead us to invent the remedy. The remedy is in God, and fallen man is no longer able to converse with God face to face.

Mr. Lanoue.—And yet it was absolutely necessary that God should address us in some way, before we could return to him; and you have thus naturally found the most convincing proof of the truth of the Scriptures in the necessity which existed for them. Besides, no one can tell us at what period the Bible was invented, supposing it to have been the work of man alone. The most ancient books we know make reference to those of Moses.

Mr. Tessier.—I assure you, however, that there are many reflecting people in our towns and villages, who think that the Bible was invented by men, to keep their fellow-men in subjection through the agency of terror.

Mr. Lanoue.—Do they believe that the parish clergymen or head bailiff were the authors of the Bible? Your critics are not very formidable opponents, Mr. Tessier. Before I take the trouble of answering their objections, as I do yours, they must go for at least ten years to college. As for you your extensive reading renders such a step unnecessary.

Mr. Tessier.—In all my reading, however, I have not found out what was the sin of our first parents: let us speak of that.

Mr. Lanoue—Man, listening to the suggestions of the serpent, ate the forbidden fruit, and he was expelled from the garden of Eden, to inhabit a land which yielded him nothing except by the sweat of his brow. The sense of this is, I think, clear enough: self-interest is represented by the animal which has most resemblance to evil—I mean the serpent; paradise is that state of the soul in which man, the true image of his Author, devotes himself to the common good, and in so doing obeys the tenderest promptings of his heart; the earth, in which the most persevering labour alone affords him a maintenance, represents, no doubt, the sad condition in which he is at present, obliged to combat unceasingly selfish inclinations before he can return to that disinterested love which was his true and original nature. Can there be a better image of our condition? How well the Being who traced this striking picture knew the human heart!

Mr. Tessier.—Let us pause for a moment, Mr. Lanoue, for I am confused and dazzled. What! does the Bible, then, in the history of the first man, only give us, as it were, the secret history of our own hearts? It represents us in the first place under our original law, which was love; and to express this it says that we then lived in the garden of Eden. It then paints our selfish propensities, against which we are obliged to struggle continually, under the figure of the land which we inhabit in the present day. I acknowledge, in the fullest manner, that such a mode of representing the fall of man enlarges my ideas greatly. I see the propriety of comparing our actual life, in which we have to wage unceasing war against our vicious inclinations, to an ungrateful soil, which we are forced to cultivate in the sweat of our brow.

Mr. Lanoue.—Thus, Mr. Tessier, you comprehend, in a few words, the general sense of the Bible. It is the history of man. Man, at first created with a love of good, like that of God himself, fell away from it, because he found it more agreeable to love himself, to the exclusion of others. Wretched man, as you see, has deceived himself, and instead of the delights which he enjoyed in Eden, he has only found the thorns of selfishness and sordid interest. That is the whole groundwork and subject of the Old Testament. We read in it that man fell, and a time is promised in which he shall arise again. The New Testament is the accomplishment of this promise. It is the means given to man, now engrossed in self, to become as pure and disinterested as he was when he issued from the hands of his Creator. Thus, the entire of the Sacred Book has but one object, that of leading us back to our primitive condition by regeneration.

Mr. Tessier.—You proceed too quickly, Mr. Lanoue: we shall go on by-and-by to the New Testament. Permit me in the meantime to pause upon the first pages of the Old Testament, which you have just presented to me in so new a light. Your idea has the double advantage of satisfying me, and of replying to some of the objections which I formerly advanced. At first I believed that man was damned for eating an apple, and I was much scandalized at the idea, as you may well imagine; in the second place, I imagined that the serpent had really conversed with our mother Eve, and I could not quite credit this miracle. You now tell me that all this is only an allegory; adieu, then, to my objections. If the Bible, at least these passages which we do not understand, are only allegorical, it is a very convenient theory, and I shall have no difficulty in accepting this interpretation.

Mr. Lanoue.—It is absolutely necessary that things which do not exist in nature should be represented by images. When you are told that the fruit which caused the fall of man, grew on a tree called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you see that we cannot avoid having recourse to allegory to explain it; for no tree bearing fruits such as are eaten at our tables was ever so called. They are moral fruits which are alluded to, and the tree on which they grow must plainly be figurative.

Mr. Tessier.—I cannot doubt it. These figurative expressions must mean something. But I confess that I have little confidence in those who explain everything by allegory. Allegory is employed by different people in different ways, and how are we to decide who is right?

Mr. Lanoue.—The Bible, from one end to the other, is written in the emblematical style; and any explanation which harmonizes naturally and easily with the whole book, from the first verse of Genesis to the last of the Apocalypse, is the only one in which we can rationally trust as a key to the sacred hieroglyphics. But such a key none of the commentators whom you have read, have ever furnished. You have never found in them any theory, which refers all the expressions in the Bible to one uniform idiom. If any one offered you this explanation, would you not say that he had been inspired by the same mind which dictated all the Bible?

Mr. Tessier.—Very true; but I have as yet seen nothing of the kind. It has always seemed to me that the Bible should be something more than so much Hebrew, Greek, or Latin, and that a profound science was concealed under these emblems; but till I am able to grasp all these at once, will you be so kind as to pause for a little upon original sin? I plainly see in man, as he exists in the present day, the traces of degeneracy; but instead of simply saying: "Human nature

has wandered from the right path," why are we told of two beings of different sexes, one of whom takes the forbidden fruit, whilst the other, who might have saved himself, consents to his ruin for the love of the first? That is not clear to me; and first of all, can you tell me why the woman, and not the man, was first tempted?

Mr. Lanoue.—In the symbolical account which is here presented to us, man is taken in a general sense, with which sex has nothing to do. When you say that man is naturally inclined to evil, you mean humanity in general, do you not?

Mr. Tessier.—No doubt.

Mr. Lanoue.—Well. It is the history of human nature which was traced by Moses, and not that of an individual.

Mr. Tessier.—What! Adam was not the first man?

Mr. Lanoue.—Adam is a collective name: it answers to our word *man* in the sense which I alluded to just now. Man, at the period spoken of in Genesis, had deviated from the true path: that is called his fall.

Mr. Tessier.—Human nature had therefore experienced, at that time, a moral revolution. That is what sacred history meant to say. It is perfectly clear. I can understand now how it was that Adam lived so many years; for his age only signifies that human society remained so long in this condition. But what about the first successors of Adam, who led such long lives: Methusalem, for example?

Mr. Lanoue.—They are, likewise, names of particular societies. It was customary in that age to designate nations or tribes by the names of individuals.

Mr. Tessier.—Excellent! That explains admirably the long lives of all these patriarchs. But if men be emblems in the Sacred Volume, natural things must be emblems likewise. Is the creation, then, a figure?

Mr. Lanoue.—It is a moral creation, Mr. Tessier. Is it not a creation worthy of the Most High, to inspire man with a love which makes him the image of God? When the prophets speak of the moral revolution which Jesus Christ was to accomplish on earth, they say that he will create all things anew; when our Saviour came, what did he create, if not a new love? Is it not reasonable to suppose that the same phraseology which has been employed, and so admirably employed, to express the divine mode of operation at a period not so distant from our own, was also used to express the same thing at an earlier period; for God is the same in all ages?

Mr. Tessier.—I am overwhelmed with astonishment! The doubts caused by my former studies are scattered. The Creator accomplished, six thousand years ago, what the Redeemer accomplished at the commencement of the Christian

era! The Redemption is a moral creation; and the creation of Genesis is, therefore, a creation of the same kind! The Great Workman who repaired the machine is the same who made it. Oh! what simplicity, what grandeur do we not find in the sacred book! Creator and Redeemer are only epithets for the same Being! No sooner is the First lost than the Second is immediately announced, that man may not be without God! Oh! Mr. Lanoue, into what an abyss do you not dash my understanding!

Mr. Lanoue.—You have found the key of the emblems. The unity of God is thus self-evident. The sacred book only gives the history of man in his intercourse with the Deity: everything in the narrative which appears foreign to this is only made use of as a figure.

Mr. Tessier.—But it is said that in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth: that is very precise.

Mr. Lanoue.—It is not the intention of the sacred historian to teach us mysteries which are beyond the limits of our understanding. God no doubt created from the first moment of his existence, for existence is the manifestation of his essence; but as we can assign no commencement to God, neither can we fix the period of the formation of the universe. The beginning mentioned by Moses is the commencement of an epoch in the history of humanity, and at this epoch God created for man a new moral heaven and a new intellectual earth. You said yourself just now, that man, when actuated by divine love, sees everything in a new light. Does a new heaven then really present itself to his eyes, new light descend on his mind?

Mr. Tessier.—Yes, Mr. Lanoue; the man who lives in divine love knows a different heaven from the material firmament; earth itself is a new habitation for him: the purified affections of the virtuous man make it a delightful abode. Oh! it is good that there should be a new heaven and a new earth for the man who is victorious over his natural inclinations. But it is too beautiful to be anything but a romantic vision. Can you prove this assertion to me, like the preceding one, out of the Holy Scripture?

Mr. Lanoue.—When Isaiah, in the sixty-fifth chapter, speaks of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, he uses these very words:—"I create a new heaven and a new earth." You see plainly that Jesus Christ has not created another heaven and earth in the literal sense of the words, but in their figurative signification. By repeating the same expressions as Moses, the prophet shows plainly that Moses attached no other signification to them. The word *earth*, in the other prophets, always signifies humanity upon the earth. Jeremiah says, in the fourth chapter—"I have regarded the earth, and it was

as nothing; I have considered the heavens, and they were without light." Observe how clear this is in the moral sense, and how absurd in the physical: for, at the time of Jeremiah, the material earth was not as nothing, and the celestial bodies diffused the same radiance that they do at the present day.

Mr. Tessier.—You carry conviction to my mind; I cannot contest the point further; doubtless, then, the new heaven and the new earth, announced by the author of the Apocalypse, will resemble in their nature those of Moses and Isaiah.

Mr. Lanoue.—Without any doubt. They are a new covenant of peace and wisdom granted to man. Then shall take place a last moral revolution, described under emblems which the vulgar have taken as announcing the end of the world. He who bears the name of Eternal, is eternal in his plans, while destruction is only the token of weakness. God is the Creator: he creates continually; the devil alone destroys.

Mr. Tessier.—Why, by your method of explanation, all that was formerly revolting to the understanding in the Bible is reconcilable with the most rigid reason. I recollect to have seen it asserted by philosophers that the world is more than six thousand years old; but they may now give it what age they like without causing any difficulty, for that will not hinder man from having been, at a particular epoch, morally created, as he has since been morally regenerated.

Mr. Lanoue.—Genesis is not a lifeless treatise on the vexed question of natural philosophy or geology. It leaves this subject to the interminable disputes of the schools. It simply treats of the living, and, as far as we are concerned, much more interesting history of the workings of Providence towards men. Let the naturalist find in the strata of our globe traces of an existence anterior to the six thousand years of the vulgar era: we, who know that the mere number is of no importance, and that God is not to be measured by time—we, I say, laugh at these puny attacks, and we grant our earth as long a life as they like to demand. Let others deny or assert the fact of the deluge, we know that the ocean has repeatedly covered certain portions of our globe; but this truth contains nothing which can shake our faith. In the magnificent symbols of the Bible there are but two real actors, God and man; everything else is but an emblem or a figure.

Mr. Tessier.—I am ready to believe with you, Mr. Lanoue, that the narrative of Moses is the history of the human race in its relation to God. That is very satisfactory. Nevertheless, it seems to me that this universe must have had a beginning. There is no house without an architect; and however deeply you plunge into the night of ages, you will still find that this great caravansary of the universe must have been prepared to receive the beings who inhabit it.

The eternity of matter is to me an idea as inconceivable as the literal interpretation of the first chapter of Genesis.

Mr. Lanoue.—I can furnish you with a cosmogony, provided that you are wise enough to assign no date to it, and to be convinced, above all, that these intellectual excursions are entirely unnecessary to our happiness and salvation. God reveals himself to us through feelings; science is simply an opinion. There is every probability that God created the universe as soon as he conceived of it in thought. Imagine to yourself what thought without action would be in man, and you will see it would be a fiction. There is in God the *Being* or *Essence*, inscrutable in itself; but there is also the *Existence*, which is its manifestation, and for the action of the latter the universe was necessary.

Mr. Tessier.—What metaphysics, Mr. Lanoue! My brain whirls. As the *Being* or principle of all things, God may have dwelt with himself as long as it seemed good in his sight, but the moment that Existence took the place of Being or Essence the universe appeared: in other words, the world was created the moment that God manifested himself. I begin to understand the subject a little better.

Mr. Lanoue.—In fact the universe is nothing else than the thought of the Deity taking a form which appeals to our senses. St. Paul has revealed to us this grand truth, when he said that the universe is a system of invisible things manifested visibly. Thus, when God converted his thoughts into action, the universe passed from the invisible to the visible state.

Mr. Tessier.—Very good. But whence did God procure the immense material of which the universe is composed?

Mr. Lanoue.—God is the only principle of everything that exists. Matter, properly speaking, is only a union, more or less coherent, of particles which in themselves have no other qualities than those of the life which moulds them into shape. Chemistry, in the present day, demonstrates that as all bodies are capable of being reduced to a state of gas, they may owe their origin to the condensation of the atmosphere of the sun. This atmosphere, abandoning its successive limits, may have formed out of a gaseous matter all the planets which surround it. Our first natural philosophers have explained on this theory the creation of the material universe. It is also very remarkable, that the most ancient nations of Asia likewise attributed the origin of things to emanations. But this air, the principle and end of all that exists, is itself only the gross receptacle of the living principle which gives to everything movement, life, and being. An immense sphere, in the bosom of which all the germs of life reposed, emanated at the beginning from the eternal centre of all existence. More subtile at first than

the impalpable ether, it gave birth, by progressively condensing, to the sun, and, through it, to inert or animated matter.

Mr. Tessier.—Thus God is a being who, as it were, has breathed forth life. The emanations of his body, if I be permitted so to speak, are therefore living, like the body itself. We can thus conceive of a sort of atmosphere, or ether, radiating incessantly from him, and carrying to the furthest limits of creation the life which it contains. Everything in nature is thus, properly speaking, alive—even that which appears to us to be dead. It is by means of this ether that we must imagine Nature passing from the invisible to the visible; thus explaining the origin of the opinion which attributes life to the breath of the Almighty. But ether is still matter, and even in this primitive matter, therefore, we must recognise the existence of wisdom and love, which are not palpable, and which notwithstanding flow out with the creative emanations. It requires a strong head to tread these heights. As for me, I am fairly dizzy. The only way of explaining it is, that there must be two kinds of emanations, the one living, the other merely containing receptacles of life, and that all issues from God by a double creation.

Mr. Lanoue.—There are, in fact, two very distinct classes of emanations; the one spiritual, the other material. It is impossible to ascend back to the first, by supposing a successive rarefaction of matter, for we find them where matter is not yet to be found, while at the same time they are to be found where it exists, for it is through the influence of these that external nature exists. The theory of material emanations leads us to seek in Nature only the matter which serves as a *medium*, or primitive envelope, to the mind. Certain philosophers of our day have been led by observation to recognise some analogy between life and a fluid infinitely more subtile than ether itself—I mean to say light.

Mr. Tessier.—Oh! let us drop these experiments; we should never have done with them. Let us return to what really exists, and simply take the creation as admitted. Let us retrace our steps; and now explain to me why the faculty of man which sinned is represented as a woman.

Mr. Lanoue.—After our daring investigations in the field of creation, follow me into the study of moral nature. Man, as all the philosophers acknowledge, is endowed with two faculties which compose his entire being. The one, which we may call by the generic name of *will*, comprises all his affections; the other, which we may term *understanding*, includes his thoughts. It is by the will that he loves; for what he loves he desires. It is by the understanding that he thinks; for, whatever he thinks, he tries to comprehend. In a word, man is made up of love and intellect.

Mr. Tessier.—I understand clearly that in me, for example, to love is not the same thing as to think. When we love, we simply feel; when we explain our feelings to ourselves, we add to love something else which belongs to the domain of the understanding. Let our metaphysicians dissect man into as many faculties as they choose, we must always resolve them into two great classes: we must attribute all affection to the will, or love—all thought to the understanding.

Mr. Lanoue.—Well, these two faculties are unequally divided in man. The understanding predominates in man, properly so called, and the will, or love, in woman. Man reasons and examines more than he feels; woman, on the contrary, feels much more than she reasons. The mental food of the first consists of opinions and science, that of the latter rather of sentiment and love.

Mr. Tessier.—Nothing can be more true. My poor wife understands absolutely nothing of the subjects which occupy me: she is good, and that is all. As for me, when I utter noble sentiments, I perceive plainly that these owe their origin much more to my understanding than to my love. My wife, on the contrary, is so occupied with her affections, that all my arguments are in her eyes so many absurdities.

Mr. Lanoue.—Man, therefore, excels in thought: his privilege is intellect. The lot of woman is love. There is no difficulty in that. These principles being thus established, let us hear the explanation of the symbol. That human faculty which predominates in woman is called in the narrative of Moses by the name of woman herself. In saying that the woman wished to eat the forbidden fruit, it is simply meant that man sinned through love. It was a love contrary to his original destination which made him fall; and it was natural enough, it seems to me, to symbolize love by the being who knows it best—who cannot live without inspiring or receiving it. The sacred text uses the word *woman*, instead of saying *love*; but is it not the same thing in reality?

Mr. Tessier.—Do you know, Mr. Lanoue, that you have led me further than ever I went before into the knowledge of man? I clearly recognise in him these two principles of thought and affection with which you endow him. I can conceive very easily, in the second place, that if man fell away from God, it must have been through another love than that which he originally possessed. Intellect has nothing to do here; in fact, the intellect may soar aloft or sink to earth, may approach to God or withdraw from him, without man's being really culpable: it is only at the moment that he loves that his lot is fixed. The nature of his love decides on the nature of his life. And that is why I believed myself virtuous in the theatre: I was virtuous only with my understanding.

Mr. Lanoue.—Thus you see, Mr. Tessier, that when love inclines a man to anything, his intellect immediately becomes an accomplice in the matter, so as to make the object appear legitimate. It will find a thousand pretexts for rendering this object worthy of its preference. Suppose that the love of man elevates him to a higher sphere, his understanding ascends in the same proportion, and he becomes eloquent and sublime; but if his love, on the contrary, plunges him into grovelling passions, the intellect, always obedient to those passions, descends with him and pollutes itself in the mire. Thus, you see that so soon as Eve had sinned, Adam consented to sin likewise.

Mr. Tessier.—Certainly; it is perfectly plain. Love, when it acts, is aided and abetted by the intellect. Adam consented to sin, just as my understanding consents to excuse my faults when my depraved will is in the wrong. Oh! how true is this history of man! It is my own story; why should it not be true of man in former times? Evil came by woman, that is to say, by love; it is also woman—in other words, a new love—who is afterwards to crush the serpent's head! What truth! How is it possible to escape the force of this evidence? But, by the way, we have now reached a point which always used to give me a most painful feeling: I allude to the malediction pronounced against the serpent and the woman. Assist me, I entreat you, to clear up this difficulty.

Mr. Lanoue.—What difficulty do you mean?

Mr. Tessier.—What difficulty! Surely you are jesting. Does not the Lord say to the serpent that he shall henceforth creep upon his belly, and eat the dust? And have not serpents, at every period, crept upon the belly? I cannot suppose that the serpent which tempted Eve had either wings or feet. In the second place, to assert that it shall eat the dust is the most wretched parody on natural history in the world. The most unlettered peasant child knows that dust is not the food of the serpent. With regard to the woman, she is told by God that she shall bring forth children in sorrow; but I have no doubt that the pains of childbirth were as inseparable from the female organization then as now.

Mr. Lanoue.—Read the Bible as you ought to do, and you will look on it in a different light. God says to the fallen and degraded love of man, that it shall creep upon the soil, that it shall live on material things; he announces to the new love which is to supplant the old, that in future it shall bring forth with difficulty pure thoughts and disinterested affections. Does selfishness not grovel in the dust? Does it not live entirely on earthly things? Are not devout inspirations the result of a painful struggle in the breast of the individual who becomes regenerated? And is not the birth of these vir-

tues the result of so much effort and self-denial, that it is fitly expressed by the painful travail of a woman?

Mr. Tessier.—Nothing can be more ingenious; but it must have been to woman, and not to virtue, that the Lord addressed himself, since he told her that she was to be obedient to her husband, and that the latter would govern her. This does not seem to be quite a malediction. In fact, it appears to me absolutely necessary, in order that all should go on as it ought to do, that a woman should be obedient to her husband.

Mr. Lanoue.—You forget everything as fast as you learn it. The Sacred Scripture speaks of neither husband nor wife: it speaks of man in general, and of his two constituent faculties. The male sex represents the understanding, and the female love. Well: the Lord announces to the principle of love, that it shall henceforth be subject to the understanding; and, morally speaking, this is the greatest possible evil which can happen to man. Unfortunate man will then cease to feel; he will be satisfied with coldly reasoning.

Mr. Tessier.—Oh! Mr. Lanoue, this surpasses all that I have heard hitherto. Do I not know and deplore the state of those men whose heart is cold, and who live only, as it were, with the head? They are bodies without souls. Oh! what delight do we not feel when the heart warms us, and we speak from its promptings! Things are therefore as they ought to be. I now see that our first parent deranged this natural order, and that the malediction of the Lord has all the wisdom of a divine mandate. In fact, the narrative so plainly means to describe man as endowed with two faculties, that we are at once reminded that it is said, in the first chapter of Genesis, that man was created male and female.

Mr. Lanoue.—That is to say, with an equal proportion of love and intellect; and it was in the commencement of his degeneracy—it was when he began to sink into the love of *self*—that woman was taken from one of his sides.

Mr. Tessier.—But, Mr. Lanoue, your manner of stating these mysteries is so strange, that it sometimes leads me to doubt. What was this rib, may I ask, which was taken from Adam during his sleep? Had he more ribs than he wanted? And why was he cast into a sleep during the operation?

Mr. Lanoue.—The sleep of man is that state of illusion in which he imagines that he lives independently of the divine influence. God then permits him to believe himself proprietor only of his material life, which is represented under the symbol of bones; had he abandoned the soul to this selfish sentiment, man would have been lost.

Mr. Tessier.—He would have believed himself God, and the possibility of regeneration would have been lost to him for ever. It is like a bone thrown to a wild beast to gnaw, lest it

should attack something more important; it is the smallest thing which God could abandon to man. But I am not yet strong enough to scale these heights without assistance.

Mr. Lanoue.—Try to comprehend that when Adam exclaimed, “Behold the flesh of my flesh!” it is just the same as if he had said, “I abandon myself to the sensation of my own life; it is indeed myself that I feel.” Previously, in fact, it was God whom he felt in himself; and this God of love and wisdom he abandoned, when he said: “A man shall leave his father and mother, and cleave unto his wife.”

Mr. Tessier.—I begin to comprehend a little. The father and mother of man, according to you, are the Love and Wisdom from above, which he leaves in fact when he yields himself up to his self-love. This, then, is the only evil: the love of self.

Mr. Lanoue.—When we begin to fall, we continue to fall farther and farther. The will is the seat of love, and the intellect that of faith. In his fall, man began to feel less and less the influence of divine love; and he at last ended by banishing it into the region of memory—it became a fact without life. It was then that Cain, or faith alone, killed Abel his brother, in whom the divine love in man is typified. You see, in fact, in these two allegorical personages the distinguishing characteristics of charity and faith. Cain, who represented the latter, offered in sacrifice to God only the fruits of the earth: that is to say, the emblems of things simply natural and without life, like himself. Abel presented animals to the Lord; and animals are the symbols of the living affections of the human heart.

Mr. Tessier.—A most striking history! It is always thus that the pure passions and virtuous sentiments into which love enters, terminate. When people no longer feel any sentiment, they take refuge in a sort of barren faith, while the sentiment itself is really extinguished; they exile it to the domain of the understanding, as a thing without life. The understanding may be considered as the grave of love. In what a melancholy condition are moral sentiments and principles when, instead of being felt, they are merely discussed! It is the story of Cain—feeling is dead, murdered by faith, and religion is a mere name.

Mr. Lanoue.—And thus you see the successors of Cain grow more and more wicked, till at last, becoming entirely the creatures of cold and barren intellect, they endeavour to scale heaven: in other words, to gain an entrance there by their own science. Man fails to attain this object; the confusion of tongues, an evident emblem of the confusion of systems, follows; and at length, intellectual disorder increasing more and more, humanity is swallowed up in the turbulent sea of its passions.

Mr. Tessier.—How unfortunate are moralists and philosophers, in not endeavouring to give their theories the sanction of the Bible. They would thus have the exquisite pleasure of travelling into a world of delight which is completely unknown to them. We have left them far behind us, Mr. Lanoue. Your explanations satisfy me in every point. I acknowledge that the entire system of Christianity is contained in the fall of man. It is because he separated himself from God that God came to win him back. The redemption is the consequence of the fall. But it is precisely because this first point is so important that I cannot let it pass without submitting to you the difficulties which perplex me, and I have a host of them in my head. And first of all, to proceed in order, while admitting with you that our first parent sinned, I do not see why I am responsible for his fault. God, if you will pardon me the expression, does not seem to me to act very justly in punishing the innocent for the guilty. I can admit original sin as an event which formerly occurred; but I do not know how my son in simply coming into the world, and in descending from Adam, is guilty of any sin whatever. What sin can this poor little being have committed? He has as yet no will of his own, and you say that he has already committed evil. Pardon me if I call such a doctrine little better than insane.

Mr. Lanoue.—This very epithet is to be found in the Sacred Volume itself. It is because original sin and its consequences are so widely removed from the thoughts of natural man, that the apostle has said of religion that it is *foolishness*. When all men are mad, madness seems so natural that to remain in one's senses appears the only real insanity, and that is the insanity of religion. Since religion forms no part of the original plan of the Creator, it must seem madness to him who believes that everything leaves the hands of the Creator perfect, and who cannot conceive the necessity of combating inclinations which he believes he derives from the Author of his being. I shall now endeavour to show you the truth of the words added by the same apostle—namely, that this foolishness is wiser than all the wisdom of men. Give me your entire attention. You say that the system we have been considering does not accord with divine justice; but we ought rather to say, that this mode of looking at the subject does not agree with the ideas you have formed of divine justice.

Mr. Tessier.—Oh! I did not weigh my words so narrowly. But do not criticise my expressions, if you please, or you will perplex me. I grant that I was in error. I now correct myself, and say that in this plan I do not recognise the supreme justice, according to the idea which I have formed of it.

Mr. Lanoue.—The idea that you have formed of it is simply

an opinion, and nothing more. But God may have a different plan from yours. Do you not observe that the inclinations of the parents, as well as their maladies, descend to their children, although you do not accuse Providence of that? Do you not know that we bring with us into the world the germ of diseases, from which we afterwards suffer? Why should we not bring with us, likewise, the germ of the moral inclinations? The one is not more difficult than the other. You are not surprised that the animals perpetuate their instincts from race to race. Why then should you be astonished that man also transmits his own to his posterity? Do you not see here the working of a great Law of Order, to which God himself has chosen to submit, because to observe the general laws he has ordained in His Wisdom, and to be consistent with Himself, is the characteristic of the Supreme Intelligence? It is not God who has changed his work: it is man, who, as it were, has disorganized himself. God left him at liberty, but He was not on that account to change the human constitution. By changing it, he would have testified that he had been mistaken when he created him capable of falling. By allowing man to withdraw from him voluntarily, he only caused his own laws to be respected. Thus, I am not responsible for the fault of my father: I merely come into the world with the conditions attached to all life on earth. A being always inherits the faculties and organization of the being which gave it birth. A healthy body produces one equally healthy; a weak temperament, one as feeble as itself. The human species, in remote times, fell away from its primitive constitution, and this degeneracy could not fail to propagate itself in succeeding races. It is a fact; and I do not see why facts should be quarrelled with by our limited reason.

Mr. Tessier.—Thus the human race has, as it were, become degenerated; and, just as among the lower animals, if we do not seek to improve it with a superior race, it will always produce abortions. Your explanation is excellent, Mr. Lanoue; but listen attentively to what I am about to say: I can see myself the defects of a degenerate race of animals, and I know how to remedy them. Now God, in order to be just, since he cannot change the degenerated human race, because that would be, as you say, to acknowledge that he had erred, should at least act as men do with regard to the lower animals—he should introduce into the fallen generations a purer germ.

Mr. Lanoue.—That is just the point, Mr. Tessier. This operation is the Redemption; this pure germ, which cannot be better characterized, is Jesus Christ. God could not change human nature at once, and recall it to him by a new constitution. But we anticipate; and to proceed in order, permit me in my turn to put a few questions to you.

Mr. Tessier.—Willingly.

Mr. Lanoue.—Do you really believe that you are born with evil inclinations?

Mr. Tessier.—From the bottom of my heart.

Mr. Lanoue.—Do you believe that your father was otherwise organized than yourself?

Mr. Tessier.—No, thank heaven! I am not alone in my unfortunate predicament. Not only my father, but the father of my great-grandfather, and his father again, had no advantage over me in that respect. From them we may go back to Adam, and seek there the beginning of our evil inclinations; for everything left the hands of God good and perfect: this point I will never abandon.

Mr. Lanoue.—Nor shall I dispute it. But tell me—Is your son born with similar inclinations to yourself?

Mr. Tessier.—No doubt; and everything that descends from him, from generation to generation, down to the thousandth, will partake of his nature.

Mr. Lanoue.—Then it is a law of transmission we are considering; and what fault do you find with the laws of God?

Mr. Tessier.—I wish that when a law, which, like this, was wise in its principles, since a means of transmission is necessary, is vitiated by those placed under its control, a remedy should be applied, by promulgating another law which abolishes the first.

Mr. Lanoue.—To remedy and to abolish are different things. Your first expression is perfectly just, the second is inconsistent, and makes you contradict yourself. What! ought God to abolish a law which you admit as wise and useful?

Mr. Tessier.—I did not think of that. I meant to say that God should, by a second law, repair the infractions of the first. I hope that this is expressing myself correctly.

Mr. Lanoue.—Well, of what do you complain? You have this law! Regeneration is the second law, which has come to re-establish the original and violated one. As he was born with divine love, man might have transmitted it faithfully to his descendants: he substituted for this divine love the love of himself, and has transmitted it accordingly. Does the law of transmission, on that account, deserve your reproaches? It might have rendered man happy, if he had pleased, just as it actually renders him unfortunate. Now, since the law of transmission, as we have seen, cannot be annihilated, can you suggest one better calculated to render man good than the law of regeneration?

Mr. Tessier.—No, Mr. Lanoue. I spoke without reflection. I see the trap you have laid for me, only when I am caught in it. God has said to man—"At present you transmit a poisonous virus to your offspring; there is the antidote

which I place at their disposal; it is their duty to take it, and not mine to force it on them against their will." The words innocent and guilty suppose an inflexible judge and an unjust condemnation: they are entirely inapplicable. If, instead of saying a guilty man, I say a man whose moral and physical nature is disorganized, I must also say, instead of an innocent man, a man who inherits the nature of his father. It is not, therefore, the divine justice that we should accuse here; it is one of those natural laws which we see every day, without ever supposing that they are subject to our understanding. We feel that here our duty is to be silent. The law of the generation of beings is like that which carries the waters of a river towards the sea. If poison were cast into the source of a river, it would be carried to its mouth. But since God subjects himself to this great law of order, why does the Scriptures say that God is angry, or in wrath with us, or that he abandons or chastises us?

Mr. Lanoue.—The Scripture expresses exactly the relations which exist between God and man; but as it is man himself who fixes the nature of these relations, it seems to us that God approaches or removes from us, when it is we ourselves, on the contrary, who abandon or return to him.

Mr. Tessier.—Precisely as a man on the deck of a vessel thinks that it is the shore which recedes, and not himself.

Mr. Lanoue.—Just so. The moral sun, which is for ever fixed in the centre of the universe of minds, sees them perform their voluntary movements around him, as the material sun sees the earth revolve in the orbit which has been traced for it by the Almighty. The inhabitants of the earth say that the sun rises and sets, whilst on the contrary he is always fixed. We also say that he scorches us in summer, and allows us to freeze in winter, whilst all the time it is the position of the earth in the ecliptic which produces the variation of the seasons.

Mr. Tessier.—Thus it is the state of man and not of God which is expressed by these phrases. The position in which he stands to God seems to him to be established by the Creator; but in the sight of God, this position is one which man assumes himself. Our language expresses appearances which we treat, and which we must from our nature treat, as realities. It is as natural for man to say that God removes himself from us, as to say that the sun sets. In both cases there is relative truth. Our relation to God is, in the moral sense, what our relation to the sun is in the physical sense. But let us return to the subject.

Mr. Lanoue.—In order to bring back fallen man to his original condition, and endow him with his original qualities, it is simply required that God should introduce into his will a reformation which permits him to return to his primitive

state, without ceasing to be the same being. Do you not believe that His wisdom and justice are revealed in a more marvellous manner by the regeneration offered to man, than if He had replaced man, by force, in the way which he had abandoned? God loves none but free actions, and a miracle on his part would have destroyed our liberty.

Mr. Tessier.—That is certain. In the beginning man was born with love towards all; he has since made himself sensual and selfish, and his children inherit his defects, as they sometimes inherit his good qualities. But I always return to these poor little unfortunates. What sins have they committed?

Mr. Lanoue.—Observe that I do not say that these little beings sin: I only say that they bring into the world with them a hereditary disposition, which will dispose them to sin, as soon as their passions are developed. What have you to say to that?

Mr. Tessier.—Well then, if sin—in short, if evil of every kind, be mere selfishness, I acknowledge that children have a very evident inclination to it. It is a fact in nature which no one can dispute. Yield to all their desires, and they will demand everything. Occupied with themselves alone, they will weep, scream, and go into convulsions, till every one gives way before them. If that be original sin, it is not difficult to recognise it; we must be blind to deny it. I acknowledge also, that there is great need of a reformation to correct these little characters, for if all infants were left to their caprices, when they grew up they would turn earth into a hell.

Mr. Lanoue.—Your good sense leads you to anticipate all my conclusions, and you must see plainly by the picture which you have drawn of infancy, that man would be for ever lost, if he had no means of reforming those vicious tendencies which date from his birth. If we were born in the natural course designed by God, our children would be all little saints; and as they would continually increase in innocence and virtue, their nurses might prostrate themselves on their knees before them. But since they are born inclined to evil, we are therefore obliged to conclude that our birth is contrary to the primitive order established by God, that our present life is a false life, and that some means of redemption are necessary.

Mr. Tessier.—I perceive we are still upon the same ground. But I do not see why, in this case, any redemption is necessary, for I fancy that the scolding of his nurse, the boisterous frolics of his schoolfellows, the punishment received from his parents and his teachers, would prove sufficient to convert the child who is born with evil inclinations into an excellent man in the end. He will soon feel from all these reprimands, that if he wishes others to yield to him, he must yield to them;

that if he is selfish to others, every one will be selfish with regard to him. He will reform, therefore, quite naturally, and without any necessity for religion.

Mr. Lanoue.—Yes; he will reform, as you say, quite naturally—outwardly; but internally—that is another matter. He will reform, just as you said some time ago that you were virtuous. He will be forced to conceal his selfishness. But at the same time, observe, that to conceal a thing is neither to struggle against it nor to extirpate it. He will give, in order that he may receive, and thus his benevolence will be a calculation; he will abstain from evil, for fear of being punished; but in this case is not his abstinence the result of fear, and not of inclination?

Mr. Tessier.—You are right, perfectly right, Mr. Lanoue. All these reprimands will produce the same effect upon the child as a purely human reform upon his father. Such a reform would make our scapegrace a greater scapegrace still, if that be possible, for he would then become a hypocrite. Selfishness, when disguised, and forced back into the recesses of the heart, is more hideous than the open selfishness which braves everything, and which blushes at nothing. After all, there is nothing like religion. At present, I look on it as the true remedy for the only evil that exists in the world; I no longer consider it in the false light of an arbitrary and senseless prohibition. Why, I have asked of others, am I prohibited by religion from loving myself, to the exclusion of the entire universe? I have been answered, that Religion, like our systems of police, is a means of restraining our propensities, in order that others may restrain theirs. But wherefore, I have insisted, do we all require to be constrained? Why has God made us contrary to ourselves? And at this question every one was silent. But notwithstanding, does not the progress of the human race offer man every day fresh means of growing better; I mean naturally and without religion?

Mr. Lanoue.—The progress to which you allude, consists in perfecting the understanding indefinitely, but the will always remains the same. Our sciences are infinitely superior to those of the patriarchal ages, but the goodness and wickedness of our hearts have not changed. The perfectability of the human species, without religion, consists in substituting the inventions of ease and luxury for the painful privations of uncivilized life. Every epoch contributes something to the greater ease of our social position; but no wise man ever supposed that these ameliorations would advance so far as to render laws for repressing the murmurs of deceived ambition unnecessary, or put an end to selfishness or sloth. In spite of all our boasted progress, we should, without religion, always have numbers of vain and selfish men striving to make the

public good give way to their own interests; hosts of mediocrities looking with a jaundiced eye on those more distinguished than themselves, crowds of the indigent in a state of perpetual hostility towards the rich and powerful. You see plainly therefore that, without religion, the men of progress would be like children with the education of their preceptors; and this proves to you, among other things, the insufficiency of Socialism, in which you once hoped to find the truth. That doctrine would bring about the amelioration of the understanding, but would not touch the amelioration of the heart, which is the only one really essential.

Mr. Tessier.—It cannot be disputed for a moment; but if children do not sin, then they will not be damned.

Mr. Lanoue.—I never said that they were to be damned. I only say that they come into the world with the original stain: there is nothing in that to hurt your ideas of divine justice. These little beings have, like us, the remedy for blotting out this hereditary imperfection, and before they are of an age to use the remedy themselves, the Deity has given them a means of regeneration, which sometimes reforms them so early, that when they are able to act and speak you would almost imagine that they were born in a state of innocence, and that they are little angels.

Mr. Tessier.—What is this means of regeneration, then? I cannot think that my poor son ever knew anything of it.

Mr. Lanoue.—Mothers seldom neglect to tell their children, when they are naughty, that they are displeasing God, and these simple words are sufficient to implant in their souls the first germs of religion. Their ears drink in, as it were, the lessons of their instructors, who make them Christians by love before they become creatures of intellect. When they are told that they must love God and not prefer themselves, this is sufficient to correct the hearts of those who are disposed to follow these precepts. Observe how their little souls reform! See how divine love descends into their conscience, and plants there the first germs of those deep-seated affections by which they are to be guided in after-life! When you are told that there are people who do good—not always with difficulty, but merely by obeying the dictates of their heart—you will observe, if you take pains to inquire, that these persons, whom at first you were tempted to believe naturally virtuous, are only so in consequence of the impressions which they received in infancy. Their remorse is caused by the recollection of the teachings of their childhood: it is not the natural state of their troubled conscience; and the force of maternal education, although its remembrance is almost effaced, retains them on the brink of the abyss.

Mr. Tessier.—Your explanation of this phenomenon, which

has often struck me, affords me much pleasure. Certainly, I have known worthy people in my life, who, I thought, produced the fruits of charity naturally, like good trees; but they were like branches grafted from an early date upon a trunk similar to our own. I have still, however, some doubts to submit to you, but I shall keep them for the next interview you are good enough to grant me. I must be able to form a distinct idea of this original degradation of man, without which we should be exempt at our birth from vice, and should, consequently, have no need of religion.

With these words, the notary took his leave and returned home, content with himself, for he believed that he had already cast off something of the old Adam.

FOURTH CONVERSATION.

THE INSUFFICIENCY OF DEISM.—FREE WILL

MR. LANOUE, delighted with the progress which Mr. Tessier had made, did not fail to ask him at their next meeting, if it would not be advisable to begin, as is customary in works on moral philosophy, by proving to him the existence of God. The notary smiled, and replied: You have just given me, Mr. Lanoue, the clue to a great truth, and one which I was far from expecting. I have always heard it said, that there is no real knowledge of God to be learned by man except in the pages of revelation. I taxed this assertion with bigotry; but at present I can plainly see that redemption, being the remedy for evil, proves the existence of God in an unmistakeable manner. If I profess pure deism, I acknowledge that a God exists. But as this God has never spoken to man, I do not follow his law; consequently, I do nothing for my moral reformation—I remain under the yoke of hereditary evil. With this vaunted natural religion I am naturally selfish, a liar, an adulterer; in a word, stained with every vice. If I abstain from vice, it is only because the law prohibits it; because I fear dishonour or punishment. That is lofty virtue, truly! Your religion is better than that, Mr. Lanoue.

Mr. Lanoue.—A fact in your moral constitution proves it clearly. It is impossible for you to deny your present degradation; if this degradation disappears, if your stains are effaced, if you become virtuous without restraint, and by voluntarily following the evangelical law, you must be aware that the religion which renders you better is the only true one, and as the truth comes from God alone, it is He, therefore, who makes himself known to you.

Mr. Tessier.—I readily believe it. Religion makes me feel God in the depths of my heart; why should I not, therefore, devote myself to it? With deism, on the contrary, I always

remain wicked, and what sort of a God is he who leaves man in a state of wickedness? You will acknowledge that such a Being can feel but little interest in the matter. In fact, when I was a deist, I fancied God far removed into immeasurable distance, and never interfering in sublunary affairs. I always required to reason myself into acknowledging his existence; for, in fact, while believing with my lips, I was often incredulous in my heart.

Mr. Lanoue.—In fact, it is the heart which proves to regenerate man that God exists, while the unregenerate man, not possessing this inward proof, looks on the existence of God only as an affair of the understanding.

Mr. Tessier.—Formerly, my mode of reasoning was as follows:—I have only five senses to judge of all that surrounds me. These senses tell me nothing of the other life; they do not inform me whence I came, where I am, who I am, and whither I am going. Experience nowise aiding me in the solution of these questions, it is worse than useless to occupy myself with them, since on that point I can arrive at no certain result. But at present I say: If my reason is unable to comprehend that which touches it most nearly, and if, notwithstanding, I find that these truths are taught, I must conclude that they reach us through revelation. I formerly combated revelation by saying that there were two books—my own heart and external nature. I now see that my heart is an instrument out of tune; I now comprehend that God reveals himself to man through this heart when it is fashioned anew; and that material nature has no part in this reform. Redemption is a fact occurring simply between God and man.

Mr. Lanoue.—By looking at the matter in this point of view, you convince yourself much more readily, I hope, of the truth of revelation, than by all the arguments in the world.

Mr. Tessier.—Another thing which dulled my belief in God was, that I saw what extraordinary progress science has made in the present day, and that, notwithstanding, our learned men are far from being the most pious people in the world. Those who should comprehend these subjects best, thought I, do not believe; how then is the poor ignorant man? I confess that this reflection frequently embarrassed me: it haunts me even now, and I will pray to God to fortify me against the sophistry of free-thinkers.

Mr. Lanoue.—But have you no decisive argument to oppose to this sophistry?

Mr. Tessier.—I know of none but revelation, but as these people cannot feel like me, I shall not try to convince them.

Mr. Lanoue.—It would be labour lost. You never can bring any one to acknowledge what he does not really love

the ruling passion of a man is the man himself. The soundest arguments in the world pass by him like the idle wind, when he does not like the conclusion to which they would bring him. I merely meant to ask if you cannot satisfy yourself, respecting the arguments of which you spoke just now.

Mr. Tessier.—Not very well, I admit.

Mr. Lanoue.—Has the progress of these sciences, which, as you say, are so far advanced, ever led you to discover any real disorder in Nature?

Mr. Tessier.—I should say not.

Mr. Lanoue.—Has the study of the sciences, the most profound examination into Nature, shown any traces of ignorance such as would lead the philosopher to say: "There are no traces of a First Cause here: I could do as much myself?"

Mr. Tessier.—I think that if the philosopher were to speak in that manner, he would richly deserve to be shut up in a mad-house.

Mr. Lanoue.—What! have all the efforts of science in the present day only served to accumulate proofs of order, harmony, and wisdom in the universe, and yet you fear that it should be inferred from these proofs that there is no God! Do not forget, Mr. Tessier, this trivial, but undeniable truth: there is no watch without a watchmaker. Neither can there be a universe without a Creator. The most famous of our academicians does not venture to believe himself capable of producing a single blade of grass with all its wonderful organization, and yet you think that chance, which is less skilful than an academician, might succeed in doing so! Come, come, this is sheer folly. Our investigations into science have only furnished new proofs of the admirable wisdom which presides over the economy of the world; be assured of that. If they have made sceptics, it is only, believe me, because these have used the power which their studies gave them, as additional incentives to pride and vanity; that is the whole case. When man gives himself up to pride, he ceases to belong to God: for acknowledgment of God is irreconcilable with pride. Man, when puffed up with self-love, is his own God; what chance is there then of preaching reform to him, of telling him that he ought to feel God within him; when he should begin by reforming his pride, and becoming as humble as a child? But, as this metamorphosis is very difficult, the kingdom of Heaven, which was promised by Jesus Christ to children, and to those who resemble them in disposition, is not often destined for our philosophers. They are too rich in their own conceits, to make themselves poor in spirit. These are the rich spoken of in the Gospel, of whom it is said, that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye

of a needle than for them to enter into heaven; Christ did not speak of the rich man whose hand is always open to relieve the indigent; he spoke of the wise and learned of his time.

Mr. Tessier.—But it is not so difficult to see the truth.

Mr. Lanoue.—Undoubtedly not; we have only to become regenerate. Those who do not become so, see the truth in vain; they do not see it such as it really exists. Pride is a poison which intoxicates, and when a man has once tasted it, it turns his brain. We only see truth in proportion as we feel. We seek to confirm only what we love. The proud man is much less concerned about truth itself than about the means of arriving through its means at honours or fortune. If the truth, on the contrary, be injurious to him, he hides it under a bushel: nay, he goes farther still; he seeks to calumniate what in his inmost heart he recognises as true, but which he thinks is calculated to do him harm. He supports the error which enriches him, and execrates the truth which drives him naked into the street. Never believe in the scientific attainments of a man who is not regenerated. In place of pursuing science in the interests of truth he will use it as a means of traffic; with it he will raise aloft his own statue, and dash down or undermine that of others; nay, he will push his madness so far as to deny his God. He will look on the acquirements of others as a theft committed in his domain, jealousy and pride will falsify all his ideas, and be very sure that he will prefer the error which he has wrought out into a system, to the truth which his fellow-man has discovered easily and naturally.

Mr. Tessier.—Oh! now I see the matter plainly: all the fine discoveries of these gentlemen are only so many witnesses against them. They are inexcusable for not having seen God in Nature; for the more knowledge they possess, the more deeply they must be convinced that Nature surpasses them. Your reflections make me feel all the truth of these words of Jesus Christ, which I may so fittingly apply to myself: "I thank thee, O my Father, that thou hast concealed these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes!" I now discover also the profound truth concealed in these other words: "Happy are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." With humility and the love of God, we believe at once, and we believe what is true. David had reason to say, "Lord, incline my heart!" But I have difficulty in considering science in this point of view. It is so beautiful in itself!

Mr. Lanoue.—Science is, like all the gifts from above, an inestimable treasure for the good man, a poison for the wicked. Intellect has been given us that we might comprehend the

truth, that we might honour it, and not degrade it into the footstool of our passions. It is a means of perfection offered to Love, wings given it by the Almighty to enable it to soar upwards to himself.

Mr. Tessier.—That is beyond a doubt; but observe to what these ideas respecting deism lead us. In order to comprehend this Christian virtue, which has excited the sarcasms of our short-sighted moralists, and against which the Socialists at present contend, I must refer to that virtue which is called humility, and which I myself formerly regarded as a token of feebleness of mind, as a prejudice of bigotry. We must be humble, we must annihilate ourselves, in order that the Divine Being may occupy our place. It is for this reason that the Scripture has said: "Be patient and humble of heart, and ye shall find rest for your souls."

Mr. Lanoue.—Self-denial is the cardinal principle of all philosophy, and, in fact, as you say, it is the fall itself which furnishes its explanation. If we do not strip ourselves of our own nature, the old Adam rules within us, and there is no more virtue possible. We must begin by annihilating ourselves, by becoming humble and submissive, that God may find access into our soul. Rousseau knew this necessity well, when he exclaimed, "Being of beings, the most worthy use I can make of my reason is to prostrate it before thee!" Has not Jesus Christ said, "If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself?" Has he not said again, "If the grain of wheat do not die, after that it is cast into the earth, it remains alone, but if it die it beareth much fruit?"

Mr. Tessier.—I do not wish to dispute about words, but our natural philosophers contradict Jesus Christ here, and inform us that the grain germinates, but it does not die.

Mr. Lanoue.—You are a living armoury of infidelity; all the weapons of the sceptics are at your fingers' ends. Do you expect that Jesus would express himself as a natural philosopher, or use our ordinary language? Was his purpose to give lessons in vegetable physiology to the people who heard him? Certainly not. Viewed in a strictly scientific light, nothing dies, everything merely changes its form and mould. The elements of a body are never annihilated, they are simply disseminated, in order to furnish means for the composition of others. But if we use the natural language suggested by appearances, everything which loses its form dies; the grain is metamorphosed into a stem and roots, it therefore dies. If a grain remains in its primitive form, it produces nothing. It is the most perfect image of man. When man dies to himself, the Divine Spirit penetrates, as it were, into his substance, and leads him to produce fruit; if he remain as he was born, he is nothing more than a being enslaved by his brutal pas-

sions. Such an image is perfectly just. It is the natural emblem of our life; St. Paul merely paraphrased it when he said that in proportion as the external man is destroyed, the internal man is renewed.

Mr. Tessier.—Yes, Mr. Lanoue, regeneration is a system too much opposed to the ordinary inclinations and ideas of man to have been an invention of his. It contains in itself something divine. Divines have told me that the life of a Christian is a trial, but I said to myself, Why does God try me? Does he take pleasure in seeing us run our race only that he may give the prize to the most nimble? I could not comprehend it. I pictured to myself God seated at the end of the arena, holding a crown for the victor and a scourge for the vanquished, and I was little pleased that he should amuse himself in subjecting us to such a trial. I now see that he does not try us; he purifies us, and that is much better. We are tried by the accidents of life, but there would never have been such tests if we had remained in the right way. And then your doctrine of regeneration leads us to find God within ourselves; what a lofty and consoling idea! You say that I have at my fingers' ends all the objections of the incredulous. I carry sometimes also in the same place the confessions extorted from them by truth. Voltaire has said: "If God be not within us, he has never existed." Now, let any one show me, without the aid of your doctrine, the God who is within us! The entire Scripture here comes to ratify your ideas, and I now understand the singular words of Jesus Christ: "He who loves his life shall lose it, but he who hates his life in the world, shall preserve it in eternity." If we love our natural life, we lose everything at our death; if we hate our passions, we regenerate ourselves for this world and the next. He has likewise told us that we must conquer the kingdom of God; and, what violence are we not forced to do to our inclinations before we can be just!

Mr. Lanoue.—Confess that he who gave us the Gospel knew man thoroughly. Man is sin; God is its remedy. The Christian religion confirms this great truth by the Scripture, which everywhere establishes these two facts: the corruption of human nature, and the means of reparation. Considered in this point of view, the plan of salvation is equally true and simple. Without the knowledge of the remedy, all religion is barren and unfruitful, because it neither knows our leaning towards evil, nor offers a counterpoise. That religion, then, which teaches me these two facts, the bases of all morality, is the true one, because it alone gives me a just idea of God and the human soul. It is the only useful religion also, because it alone furnishes us with a curb sufficiently strong to restrain us from evil, without sub-

jecting us to constraint, or making us guilty of dissimulation. Virtue tells us to combat our passions, the Christian religion holds the same language, therefore virtue and the Gospel are one and the same thing.

Mr. Tessier.—How easily you demonstrate the truth of Christianity! In fact, I can offer no objection. Admit that human nature has fallen, and the redemption follows as a necessary consequence of the wisdom of Providence, which establishes order where confusion formerly reigned. But if we suppose that human nature has not fallen, there is no means of explaining the condition of man; adieu in that case to morality and philosophy. And it is worthy of observation that we must give up morality and philosophy at the same time, if we abandon religion. With your arguments, Mr. Lanoue, I think I could convert every sincere and truth-loving man. The majority of men refuse to believe in God, because he does not reveal himself to them directly. Christianity alone tells us why he acts in this manner. It demonstrates why the Creator is concealed, why the creature is no longer conscious of his presence. Where is the sincere man who does not feel his natural vices, and who is he that, feeling them, will refuse to believe in the efficacy of a remedy which destroys them? In becoming honest men, we become Christians. I wish to be an honest man, Mr. Lanoue, and this desire alone makes me a Christian from conviction. You must confess that this is obtaining a grand result by the simplest possible means. When this is our firm and constant intention, it is a proof that we are approaching the truth. This, Mr. Lanoue, is also a proof that the Gospel is true.

Mr. Lanoue.—There is, besides, the proof afforded by all historical traditions. All tradition speaks of an age of gold, of a fall, of a reparation. Every nation has believed in a former and happier condition of the human race.

Mr. Tessier.—Yes, but is this not merely the regret of the aged, who look back with melancholy to years long since vanished? May it not be alleged that the human race, discontented with the present, is like an old man directing his gaze continually towards the past, which he unceasingly eulogizes? Has not some poet, listening to the tales of by-gone days, as they fell from the lips of a village Nestor, framed a legend of a golden age, which has since obtained belief like an article of faith?

Mr. Lanoue.—The old man, my friend, looks back into the past, as you say, but he announces no better days to his posterity; on the contrary, the future is dark before his eyes. But the future of humanity has never been for a moment unilluminated by the Aurora of Regeneration. The lost age of gold has always been placed side by side with the promised one.

Mr. Tessier.—Ah! I have no need of traditions to strengthen my belief. I rely on what I feel, and that is sufficient for me. But notwithstanding all the light which has been thrown on my mind by your explanations, I have still some scruples remaining. God knows everything; does he not? He knew, therefore, in creating man, that man would sin; why then did he create him? and why, if he insisted on placing him in the world, did he not preserve him beforehand from evil?

Mr. Lanoue.—The answer to this question demands some attention. You know what free-will is? Well, it is free-will which solves the mystery. Man is born with the full and entire liberty of doing good or evil, as he may choose. If he does evil, he feels, so strongly as to preclude any attempt at self-deception, that he had the power of resistance; if he does good, he perceives likewise that he only does it, as we recently observed, after a combat against his propensities, in which he has been victorious. If this liberty did not belong to man, you must feel that he would forfeit the noblest prerogative of his nature; that in doing good, as in committing evil, he would be merely obeying a blind impulse.

Mr. Tessier.—You are right; every one acts on the supposition that mankind has free-will. If my son behaves improperly, I take care to correct him, because I know that it is in his power to conduct himself better; if, on the contrary, he behaves with propriety, I recompense him for having avoided the evil; and, in so doing, it seems to me that I am crowning a little conqueror with laurel.

Mr. Lanoue.—But suppose your son, in doing what is evil, did not know what he was doing, would you punish him?

Mr. Tessier.—No; he would not then be a free agent.

Mr. Lanoue.—If, after having done a good action, he were to say to you, "I did that without design, without intention, by chance," what recompense would you give him?

Mr. Tessier.—None at all, upon my word. I should say to him: "My son, you do good and evil by chance, without intention or premeditation; you deserve, it is true, neither praise nor blame, but you do no great honour to your faith."

Mr. Lanoue.—You must confess then that, if God had deprived man of his liberty, he would not have created a being worthy of himself, but an automaton, and nothing more. God has endowed man with liberty, in order that he may be capable of merit or demerit; in order that his virtue may be acquired by generous efforts, and that his vices may be imputed to weakness or perversity. To deprive man of liberty is to destroy the very principle of his life. Liberty, in fact, is the essence of love: what man loves and wishes, he does freely; if he be constrained to do any act, he hates that act. In order that man should again unite himself to God by love, it was

absolutely necessary for God to create him a free agent. To prevent man from one day falling into evil, God must have deprived him of free-will, and that would be equivalent to reducing his reason to the instinct of the brute. God knew that man would sin; but had man been so created that it was no longer in his power to transgress, his eternal union with God would no longer have been voluntary; God could only preserve him from evil, by giving him capacity of resistance and the power of being virtuous by choice. It is in this choice that all the merit of a man consists.

Mr. Tessier.—This is rather profound for my intellect; but on careful consideration, it contains nothing with which I can find fault. I will only ask you, why God, who had created man free, did not, nevertheless, arrest the hand of Eve, at the instant when she was about to consummate the misfortune of her husband and of all their posterity? It was such a heavy blow directed against God's own work!

Mr. Lanoue.—If the hand of God were always present to restrain us, our liberty would be merely a name. If he created us free only to constrain us afterwards, he would act in contradiction to himself. He cannot oppose the law which he has ordained, and by which man is made the arbiter of his own fate; but he can furnish a remedy consistent with the same law. Such a remedy is the Redemption, which is to efface original sin. If after this you persist in saying that, in consequence of the urgency of the case, God should modify his laws, you talk like a child.

Mr. Tessier.—But at least you must admit that he foresaw the evil, and yet did not preserve his most perfect work.

Mr. Lanoue.—If he saw the evil, he also no doubt saw the remedy, since he sees everything, even to the remotest futurity; and we may safely conclude that he pronounced the latter a compensation which more than counterbalanced the former. You say that the work is destroyed, and you accuse the Deity of powerlessness; I, for my part, say that the work carries within itself the means of its re-establishment. Whether is it wiser on the part of God to change the original plan of creation, to act to-day contrary to that which he did yesterday, or to remain always faithful to his original plans, and to appeal to the purified love of man to restore that which this depraved affection had deranged?

Mr. Tessier.—Your reply gives me an insight into a great law. Just as God formerly allowed crime to consummate its own ruin, he still leaves it free in the present day to act in the same manner; thus, therefore, the triumph of the wicked should not astonish us; this fact does not impeach the justice of divine Providence in my eyes.

Mr. Lanoue.—It would be a childish objection indeed.

Mr. Tessier.—And yet many short-sighted people have no other motive for refusing to believe in God. I one day heard a young coxcomb, a thorough profligate by the way, reasoning with one of his friends, who was endeavouring to rekindle the divine spark of religion that was still smouldering in his breast. He spoke very much in this way: "Think for a moment, my dear friend, on the actual state of things: you pray diligently to God, and yet you are always unwell, nothing prospers with you, and you are not rich. I, on the contrary, never pray, and yet I am always in excellent health; I have no cares; everything prospers in my hands. You see that the Deity, if there be one, is unjust. You would find yourself much better to-day had you lived in the same way as I do. You do not enjoy life, while I, on the contrary, turn it admirably to account. It was in vain that his poor friend spoke of the future life, in which every one is to find an abode proportioned to his merits; the other answered him jestingly with the proverb, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." My dear Mr. Lanoue, the world is full of such jesters, and the objection which you treat with contempt has been made to me by a host of people. I did my best, like the young man, to appear firm in my stirrups, whilst my poor understanding was all the while fairly unhorsed.

Mr. Lanoue.—And how would you reply to it now?

Mr. Tessier.—I should say that if man saw the hand of God in all his actions, he would not venture to do anything for fear of being punished; and then, as he would do good from compulsion and not from choice, the morality of his actions would be destroyed. In this case, it would be God himself who would do our work. If the wicked man did not succeed in his projects, he would perceive that he was constrained in his liberty; fear would take the place of love in his heart, and all hope of regeneration for him would be gone. Liberty is the treasure of human life. Nothing that is done through fear or compulsion is done freely by man; and if God interposed his power to hinder the actions of the wicked, the good would serve him from interested motives, while the wicked would become hypocrites attached to him only by constraint. The human race would be merely puppets or automaton.

Mr. Lanoue.—You are right; and I see you comprehend the absolute necessity of free-will. The conviction that he has free-will is so deeply seated in man that nothing can extirpate it; we wish to be free in our affections, and that is the reason why favours so often only render people ungrateful. The benefactor, in fact, wishes to be paid for his good deed by the gratitude of the person obliged; while the latter, being thus deprived of the liberty of loving freely and for himself, and feeling that love is exacted from him as a duty,

naturally disobeys, because violence is done to his sentiments.

Mr. Tessier.—The means by which we may avoid rendering people ungrateful, is to forget the favours we have conferred. If he who gives forgets his liberality, if he does not make his charity a burden to the receiver, the poor man will recollect it. It is for this reason that a reproach destroys gratitude. In fact, after that, how can you expect that you will be spontaneously loved?

Mr. Lanoue.—Observe, besides, that it is this same natural, or rather divine, instinct of liberty, which makes every one incline towards what is forbidden. In fact, to enjoin on a man not to do anything, is virtually to say to him, "I take from you the merit of abstaining voluntarily;" and he to whom this language is addressed feels immediately a desire to exercise his fettered liberty. "Ah! you wish to make an automaton of me, do you? Well, we shall see!" is the natural reply in such a case, and this is at once taken for rebellion.

Mr. Tessier.—And thus wise men endeavour to lead us in such a manner, that we shall ourselves have the merit of abstaining from evil without any necessity for a prohibition. Your religion, Mr. Lanoue, throws light on every doubtful point. But can you tell me, since we are upon this subject, why woman loves what is forbidden more naturally even than man himself?

Mr. Lanoue.—I have already told you; it is because love predominates in woman, and the essence of love is liberty.

Mr. Tessier.—How stupid I am! If I had reflected for a moment, I might have seen that it was precisely because the fruit was forbidden that Eve plucked it. This brings us back to the fall of man, and respecting it I wish to ask you how could man, who was so happy and so enlightened in the bosom of his God, separate himself from his Maker?

Mr. Lanoue.—The man who sits down to table with a good appetite, takes pleasure in satisfying his hunger. When this desire is satisfied, and when he continues to eat merely from sensuality, he commits the sin of the first man. Our first parent was endowed with a feeling of self-love, which was perfectly legitimate as long as it simply served to preserve the existence of the individual, in order that this existence might be serviceable to the public good. But the moment he went so far as to forget the public good, and, in indulging his self-love, looked only to his own gratification, he violated the law of his being, he neglected universal benevolence to concentrate his powers on himself, he endeavoured to monopolize the rays of the moral sun which he should have shared with others.

Mr. Tessier.—That is self-evident. He absorbed the divine light, just as a dark body absorbs the colours of the sun. It

is for that reason, no doubt, that we say that selfishness is so black. But I fear I am going back instead of advancing, for it seems to me that I ought to have been able, after our second interview, to resolve this problem without your assistance. It was just as easy for Adam to fall, as it is for us to pass the limit which separates temperance, or what is necessary, from sensuality, or what is superfluous. But still how enlightened man must have been when in the bosom of God!

Mr. Lanoue.—There is nothing more powerless than intellect when opposed to passion. Although living in the bosom of God, man wished to know if he could not live alone. He wished to feel the sense of his own individuality. It is so tempting to believe ourselves something! How much wisdom do we not require before we can be persuaded that we are nothing, that we can do nothing, that God alone is everything. "If you eat of this fruit," said the serpent, "you shall be Gods yourselves;" that is to say, if you trust to your own life, and to your own law, you shall live by your own power, by your own energy. Divine love was an influence communicated to man, but self-love would have been an independent life, and how difficult to resist the temptation of exchanging a life derived from another, for one which we give to ourselves? All the wisdom of man was powerless to restrain him, for feeling and passion are always victorious over the evidence presented to us by our reflection.

Mr. Tessier.—His love must have blinded him; but, in fact, love never reasons, it follows its impulse as if it were irresistible. Yet, how can it be denied that we receive our life from God?

Mr. Lanoue.—There is no man who does not know that he is mortal, that the life which animates his body comes from a foreign source; and yet, how many, seduced by a strong sensation of vital energy, imagine that their existence is something depending on themselves. They fancy they direct the machine which is only lent to them, and which they do not themselves possess. Nay, I fear that they are sometimes tempted to forget, in their madness, that they had a beginning and will also have an end. The two extremes of life disappear from before their eyes, leaving them only the present, and in the present they see only themselves.

Mr. Tessier.—We read, in fact, of monarchs whose pride led them to believe themselves formed of a different clay from that of other men. But why did the Deity implant in us such a love of life? If we are blameable for being attached to life, it must be confessed that the temptation is almost irresistible; we can scarcely avoid believing that we live, in some sort, by our own energy. This is the whole spring of

action. If I said: it is God who lives in me, I have nothing to do; I should remain in a state of apathy and lifelessness.

Mr. Lanoue.—True: but although we are to feel an attachment to life, we are not to concentrate all our faculties on this attachment. True morality and religion require that, while we act freely, we should at least tacitly recognise that we are only agents of the Divine Being. Without this acknowledgment, we make ourselves our own Deity.

Mr. Tessier.—The acknowledgment is, in fact, made by every sensible man, it is only fools who allow themselves to go farther; and I can fully understand that there is no depraved passion which does not contain some proportion of folly. Reckless passions always cloud the mind with darkness, and our first parent was thus blinded. But, since we have come to speak of the love of life, tell me how it is that, though the present life is only a preparation for another, God has implanted in us such a strong attachment to it. It appears to me that the prospect of future happiness, and the assurance of the immortality of the soul, should make us look with indifference on a life so thickly strewn with cares.

Mr. Lanoue.—Divine Providence does all that it wishes to do. If the prospect of future happiness were stronger within us than the sensations which attach us to the present, we should cease to live, we should no longer be good for anything. If we were always longing for the moment of our death, our occupations would lose all their charms; we should be imperfect beings, without any desire for prolonging life. We should be also profoundly indifferent to the acquisition of that knowledge which serves to raise our souls to God, and should take no interest in those acts of charity which lead us to cultivate virtue on earth.

Mr. Tessier.—How admirable is this instinct, which God has implanted in us for the preservation of our life! Thus the unconquerable love of existence, which makes the most intrepid saint recoil at the sight of death, has been given us by God, in order that we may remain where he has placed us, not from force, but of ourselves. By this means, we render ourselves useful up to the last moment. We love life as if it were a possession of our own, and God makes use of this instinct to attach us to the human machine. It is indeed wisely ordered. Life again is a pleasure only in so far as it is accompanied by action. God knows the means to make us work. Do you see any one idle? Be assured he feels existence burdensome; and simply because he does not work. I will also add, following out your theory, that it is because he suspends for the moment the operation of that law which requires that we should always have a love. All desire dies

within him, nay even life itself; and apathy and *ennui* take their place. We wonder at those imaginary invalids who, to use the common phrase, do not know what they want, and who in their restlessness, fly about incessantly from one place to another. The problem is very easily solved. Life is gliding away from them, and, with it, its long perspective of hopes and its vast domain of thought, as the good La Fontaine says. Having no great purpose in view, they require petty excitements, such as amusement, travelling, and drugs. These amuse them for the moment, but that is not enough. Their hopes are too soon exhausted; their desires are easily satisfied, and fresh ones take their place. Thus, anything which we love has always an end in view; if this end be short, inconstancy necessarily ensues; if it be useless, we are punished for it by a sensation of apathy. How well we read the human heart with this doctrine!

Mr. Lanoue.—When a man believes himself threatened by death, what does he regret? Not life itself, but rather the purpose which life is to serve. One man only wishes to finish the house he has begun to build, another desires to complete his poem, a third wishes to see his children far enough advanced in life to do without his aid. Thus, you see, it is always some task to be performed which attaches us to life.

Mr. Tessier.—But where is the crime of loving life?

Mr. Lanoue.—Crime in every case has the same origin. We should live in order to acquit ourselves as honest men in the position in which we are placed, knowing that God has given us the love of life in order that we may turn it to account. If we wish to live only to enjoy the light of the sun for a few years longer, and aggrandize ourselves under the pretext of endeavouring to do good, we commit evil.

Mr. Tessier.—It is still this accursed selfishness. It is in vain that we fly from one point to another; we always return to the place from which we started. Yes, Mr. Lanoue, the man who loves life for himself, and yet says that he loves it for the sake of others, is a liar, as well as the man who does good without a religious motive. He does the external or natural good, but not the spiritual and only real good, since the latter springs from the inward thought. One man, if we are to believe him, wishes to live only for the sake of his family or his country. But probably neither the one nor the other requires him, and gold is the stimulant. Spiritual good is the only real good, natural good is nothing but a pretext.

Mr. Lanoue.—Do you never find people devoid of religion, who yet unblushingly ask: What need have I of such a restraint? I do good without religion.

Mr. Tessier.—Just as I said myself, Mr. Lanoue. But let us say what we like, this good is merely a pretence to enable

us the better to conceal our real intentions. We know in our hearts that we are selfish, but to avoid blushing for this vice, we lay claim to natural goodness.

Mr. Lanoue.—Just like Adam, who, to avoid the shame of confession, concealed his nakedness with fig-leaves. The fig-tree, in Scripture, is an emblem of natural or outward good, and you see clearly that Adam had only that pretext to allege, in order to conceal his fall from himself.

Mr. Tessier.—By-the-bye, the miracle of the fig-tree, which Jesus destroyed because it bore no fruit, has always puzzled me greatly. Voltaire has some biting jests on that subject.

Mr. Lanoue.—Natural good produces no spiritual or real fruits in the sight of God; and when God descended on the earth, the human race, which was sunk in the most complete selfishness, possessed no other. In destroying the fig-tree, Jesus meant to express the worthlessness of that of which it was the emblem; and in so doing spoke the figurative language we meet with in Genesis.

Mr. Tessier.—What new ideas you give me of the sacred volume! Your fig-tree is quite as satisfactory as your spiritual creation and fall of man. I recollect another circumstance in which it is mentioned. Jesus said to Nathanael, that he saw him under a fig-tree; did he mean to say that Nathanael possessed only the simple outward good?

Mr. Lanoue.—Precisely; he had read this in his heart. Nathanael is described in the Gospel as an Israelite indeed in whom there was no guile; consequently every one must have believed him good. Jesus, who knew the most secret depths of the human heart, told this man what he really was, and Nathanael, surprised to find himself so correctly judged, immediately believed on the words of the Saviour.

Mr. Tessier.—Yes; but Jesus added, "You shall see greater things: you shall see the heavens opened, and the angels appear."

Mr. Lanoue.—That requires no very long explanation. Nathanael having followed our Lord, and consequently abandoned natural good for spiritual, thereby commenced to be regenerated. It is clear that Jesus promised him, that if he continued in this path he should see heaven opened and the angels appear. This heaven is that of the regenerated man alone, and the angels are the good affections which then take up their abode with him.

Mr. Tessier.—How delighted I should be to read the Gospel, verse by verse, in this manner. Oh! Mr. Lanoue, what a mass of profound thought lies concealed in this book, which the frivolous so often regard with disdain!

Mr. Lanoue.—Some day, please God, you will be able to read the Gospel with the explanations which you wish; in the

mean time, do like Nathanael: knowing the insufficiency of your virtue, struggle to acquire that better virtue which will open heaven and fit you for intercourse with angels.

Mr. Tessier.—But one must be very learned to become a Christian. I did not think I should have to do so much.

Mr. Lanoue.—It is certainly a great labour for a man who has lost his way by following in the mazes of error. You have eaten the fruit of the tree which gives the knowledge of good and evil, Mr. Tessier; that is why so much remains for you to do. You have need of all this knowledge, simply because you have unfortunately acquired a mass of false learning which requires to be counteracted. If, instead of torturing your mind to such a degree, you had endeavoured to correct yourself by the means indicated in the Gospel, you would have believed forthwith; in fact, you would have *felt* the truth of Christianity. The criticisms of those who reject it would have been powerless to affect you. Far from believing, you would have pitied them; you would have said: They do not know the internal sense of the Scriptures, which I have learned. Regeneration, in fact, awakens in us a new moral sense, which in itself serves as a living proof. Those who pretend that they do not believe, deceive themselves: they ought to say that they do not feel; and such a confession, in the mouth of those who remain the same as they were at their birth, is in no way calculated to shake your conviction. Gather the fruit of the tree of life, my dear friend, and you will cease to say that we must be learned in order to believe. Ask the earthly lover if he believes in love. "Believe!" he will reply, "*I feel*; that is far better." Religion is itself a sort of love; it has life, how then can it be shaken by reason?

Mr. Tessier.—I have learned from you, Mr. Lanoue, real knowledge of man and God. I am now only anxious to know what will become of me after death. I wish to know the meaning of the words, *the life to come, heaven, hell, and purgatory*. Besides, since I now know what I have to do, I should also wish to be informed, if possible, what will be the recompense of my obedience.

Mr. Lanoue.—If you have patience to listen to me. I think I can offer you a prospect which justifies the hopes of the virtuous. But we shall resume this subject another time.

FIFTH CONVERSATION.

THE LOVE WHICH REIGNS WITHIN A MAN DETERMINES THE NATURE OF HIS FUTURE LIFE.

MR. TESSIER did not fail to seize the earliest opportunity of returning to Mr. Lanoue's. The boundary of his view was wonderfully extended; but he had not yet advanced so far as to have any distinct ideas on the subject of heaven and hell.

He had often pondered on these subjects, but without succeeding in forming the least idea of them. "Mr. Lanoue," said he, to his Christian instructor, "in showing me these things you have trod on lofty and sacred ground. I suppose the subject has elevated me with it, for I am amazed to find I have been able to follow you. How happy I am to have such a guide!"

Mr. Lanoue.—You must now practise what you know: when you are willing to do that, you are a real Christian. All may be summed up in one sentence: Love what is good; in doing so, you will fulfil all the precepts of the Gospel. What prevented you from doing real good was your self-love; you now acknowledge with me the necessity of combatting it, and of confining it within its proper bounds. Detach yourself from self and the world; then, rising above all the passions which embarrass man here below, you will have nothing left to hinder you from being happy in this life and happy in the life to come. This mortal life determines the nature of the future one. As the seed is, such will be the plant.

Mr. Tessier.—But, Mr. Lanoue, you told me not long ago that the Christian life consisted especially in the use we were of in society. Now, if I detach myself from the world, how do you expect that I can be useful to others?

Mr. Lanoue.—Detach yourself from the world, while still continuing to live in the midst of it. Do not set your heart on its goods and riches, but endeavour to procure them, in order to diffuse them around you. In the midst of all terrestrial wealth, remain free in heart and mind. You will have no thirst for earthly treasures, except with the view of rendering yourself useful—you will hasten to share them with your necessitous brethren, and thus satisfy the sweetest claims of love. Take advantage of the passions which disturb men, to lead them towards the truth; profit by their avarice and their selfishness, to induce them to do something which may advance the public good, while they believe that they are only working for themselves. Let even your tastes, which have reference only to earth, tend to make the world a sojourn of peace. The most material good, if done in the sight of God, becomes forthwith a moral good. Our earthly passions may become wings to waft us to heaven. Imitate the wise steward, who, with the mammon of unrighteousness, made for himself treasures in heaven.

Mr. Tessier.—What a narrow view I took of these words! I believed that God, by these words, recommended us to employ ill-gained wealth in purchasing a place in Paradise. This mammon of unrighteousness, then, means earthly goods, on which foolish and unreflecting men set their hearts, but which wise men use, in order to disseminate them with prudence and charity. Such an interpretation is far from being

forced. This life, which we ought to render useful, is the talent of which the Gospel speaks. He who returned it untouched to his master, instead of being well received, was reprimanded. He who turned his talent to the best account was welcomed as the most faithful servant. What a pleasing image of our mortal condition! In isolating yourself from your fellow-men, you may, perhaps, imagine that you are working out your salvation. Do not deceive yourself; you may be doing nothing for your reformation. Repeated temptations prove a man, as the oft-recurring blasts render a tree capable of braving the tempest. Action renders our virtues fruitful; if not put in action, they gradually die within us. There is no real love which does not manifest itself towards our neighbour. But, Mr. Lanoue, this is a sermon. And yet, how beautiful is your religion in theory, and how easy in practice. I cannot recover from my astonishment. I formerly believed that unless I spent six hours a-day at Church I could not possibly be saved.

Mr. Lanoue.—It is, no doubt, pleasant to meet with our brethren in the place consecrated to religion. There, at least, we are supposed to have another end in view than the low earthly interests which are elsewhere the basis of all our actions—there, at least, we call home our thoughts from the world, and promise before God that we will belong to him and to our neighbour. But God has designed us for a life of action; he has even ordained that our existence should become a burden to us so long as we are unoccupied.

Mr. Tessier.—While a life of action is generally a very happy one.

Mr. Lanoue.—How could you imagine that love could possibly lead us to misery? The first steps are certainly difficult, because they are resisted by a rival love; but when the latter is expelled, God himself takes up his abode in man, and we enjoy the most heavenly peace.

Mr. Tessier.—I have always looked on a religious life as something excessively insipid; devout people always appeared to me overwhelmed with melancholy. When a sick man begins to think of religion and conversion, do not people say: Drive away these melancholy ideas; you will have time enough to think of all that by-and-by?

Mr. Lanoue.—This proves to you that what people take for religion is really not religion at all. St. Paul says to the truly devout: Rejoice always. Your sad devotees are people who regret their worldly life, and who make an unwilling sacrifice of their passions to God. You must feel that where there is no repentance for sin, but only regret for the inability to commit it anew, religion is in fact a very sad affair. These are the people whom Tertullian calls the *devil's penitents*. There

are no sufferings in a life of piety but the obstacles which the virtuous man finds in his path; that is to say, the battle which he has to wage with his natural selfishness. This being once surmounted, another love takes possession of our soul, and when we obtain what we sincerely love, I presume that there is no more pain to endure.

Mr. Tessier.—And, in fact, Jesus says that the man who finds a treasure in a field feels such joy that he sells all that he has, and purchases that field. Your religion, Mr. Lanoue, is a great treasure in the field of life. If a man is sad, it is because he has not found it. The paschal lamb, among the Hebrews, was eaten with wild lettuces, to indicate, I think, that bitterness is mingled with joy in the breast of him who has still the contest to wage. If our inclinations were not opposed to the purity of religion, there would be nothing painful in our return to it. Nevertheless, a slight difficulty remains; love does not bring with it all its recompense. If that were the case, what would be the purpose of the other life? Are we not always told that the other life is a compensation for the labours of the present and that Paradise shall be given as a reward to those who have loved and served God?

Mr. Lanoue.—He who is influenced in anything which he does, by the hope of a recompense, is a selfish man. If he worship God, his worship is selfish. Raise your thoughts, Mr. Tessier. Can any other recompense be given to love than love itself? Tell a mother that if she loves her son she will be rewarded. "Ah!" she will say, "can there be a richer reward than the affection itself?" If you have already purchased that pleasure in this world, you have a precise idea of the recompense which you will one day receive. In continuing to live, you will continue to love as you have loved. It is the nature of man's love which constitutes his punishment or his happiness. Pure love seeks out associates similar in character to itself. Depraved love unites itself to beings equally depraved. Paradise, therefore, contains all possible good, and hell all possible evil.

Mr. Tessier.—Then man is the sole master of his fate. How simple! The virtuous man knows what he will obtain, and boldly marches towards the goal; the criminal hopes in the Divine mercy, and, shutting his eyes, plunges into the fathomless abyss. If he knew that in a future life he will continue to live as he is doing now—if he knew that his depraved love will continue to torture him there as it does here—oh! it seems to me that he would reform.

Mr. Lanoue.—When man has once permitted evil to take root in his heart, he becomes the slave of his vices, and has no longer strength enough to correct himself. We are tormented by them; we acknowledge it; we even confess it to others;

but, notwithstanding, we do not correct them. The reason of this is that we are governed by our ruling passion. In order to stifle within us a love which deceives and enslaves us so cruelly, we must prevent it from governing us; we must replace it gradually by another. In short, we must cease to do evil; the good will come afterwards of itself.

Mr. Tessier.—Oh, yes! Mr. Lanoue; I long to expel every vice from my heart, because I wish to awake in the other life pure and holy. I do not wish to lose what I love; I feel that my love is identical with my being.

Mr. Lanoue.—And to accomplish that, you have only to exert yourself. The Divine mercy throws open heaven to no one as a gratuitous gift. That would be a species of mockery. How can you expect that God would introduce a man of depraved passions into his Paradise? That would be to place a devil by the side of an angel. Affections similar in their nature can alone be united.

Mr. Tessier.—But I believed that a man who was absolved by the divine mercy was cleansed from all his sins.

Mr. Lanoue.—To be absolved from crime a man must sincerely repent. If he do not repent of his fault, he must still retain the desire of sinning. Well! an evil desire, as you know, conceals an evil life. God, in spite of all his mercy, will not force a man who rejects heavenly love, to submit to its influence. In so doing, God would violate his own laws. His mercy would be in contradiction to his wisdom, and when God does anything, all his faculties are in perfect harmony.

Mr. Tessier.—He is not like man, whose heart often says yes, when his head says, no. In the Omnipotent there is goodness, but there is also justice; and I feel that, conformably to this order, we cannot implant in man a love contrary to his inclinations. Souls are not to be recast in a variety of moulds; they must themselves choose the nature of their love. Pure love is so contrary to depraved affection, that the latter cannot endure a sudden influx of the former. It is absolutely necessary that man should receive it voluntarily. Tell me if the passions of the libertine could exist in company with Platonic affection?

Mr. Lanoue.—Certainly not. They are two extremes.

Mr. Tessier.—As man does not change his nature in a moment; as there is no miraculous grace which, in the twinkling of an eye, transforms an infernal life into a heavenly one, so there is no regeneration, I am very sure, operated instantaneously.

Mr. Lanoue.—You feel, in fact, that this would be a magical conversion, and not a voluntary and well-reflected reform. Every change in the universe takes place by insensible gradations. It is so with the human heart. As daylight gradually

fades into twilight, and thence as gradually into darkness, so, in the moral changes which take place in man, there is a certain dawn which separates truth from error. In some individuals regeneration takes place more rapidly, in others more slowly. One man feels his heart touched, but it returns immediately to its original obduracy ; another requires only a single ray of light to enable him to see the truth and retain it through life. Some are led to regeneration from serious reflections suggested by disease, the loss of friends, or the uncertainty of life ; another rushes to religion, when satiated and disgusted with grandeur and pleasure.

Mr. Tessier.—That is why devout people hold that the misfortunes and sufferings of this life are blessings sent from heaven. But I cannot clearly understand this language.

Mr. Lanoue. —Although misfortune and suffering present opportunities of reformation, they do not constitute in themselves a state of sanctity. If we really desire to reform we must voluntarily sacrifice both ourselves and the world. Now, in poverty and illness we too often make this sacrifice unwillingly, and that in no respect forwards the work of salvation. It may indeed happen, and it sometimes does happen, that a man, by suffering and loss of fortune, is led to see the hollowness of those things by which other men are seduced ; if he turns this salutary crisis to account, he is undeceived for the remainder of his days, and he marches on with rapid steps in the way of regeneration.

Mr. Tessier.—You speak like a book, Mr. Lanoue. Misfortune is the best instructor of men, and, in this sense, I understand you perfectly well. But the temporary reform produced by disease or weakness is negative, and therefore of no value. In point of fact, what merit do you find in the sobriety of a wretch without a penny in his pocket, or the temperance of a sick man who takes pleasure in nothing ? You must confess that, in these cases, to offer the sacrifice of our inclinations to God, is mere mockery. And, by-the-bye, I recollect to have read in one of the prophets, Malachi, I think, that the Lord is angry with men because they offer him animals which are blind, lame, or sick. I now see that this means the sacrifice of feelings which are dead in our hearts, and which we have therefore no merit in sacrificing. That the sacrifice may be perfect, it ought to be made when we have still the power of refusing. But, tell me, now, by what tokens can we discover when regeneration has commenced ?

Mr. Lanoue —Nothing can be more simple. We then feel pleasure in doing good for the sake of the good itself ; we love and seek the truth for the truth itself. Be assured that the man who acts thus from real inclination, apart from all selfish considerations, regenerates himself.

Mr. Tessier.—And so we are not regenerated, even when we do good and speak the truth, if we act thus with a view to our own interest. We are not regenerated either, when, far from feeling sorrow at the misfortune of our neighbour, we smile at the idea, or gratify our secret malignity by slander; in short, when we do nothing tolerably well, without claiming the merit and glory for ourselves. Ah! my dear Mr. Lanoue, those are the tokens by which we every day distinguish, in the world, the honest man from the hypocrite. It follows from what we have said, that regeneration, depending, as it does, on the circumstances in which every one is placed, differs according to the individual character.

Mr. Lanoue.—No question of it, if your tastes incline you in one direction, and leave you indifferent about something else, it is very clear that you will have no merit in sacrificing that to which you are indifferent. Every one has his weak side, and to that side we must turn. If I hear the love of wine blamed, and if I from choice only drink water, am I to believe myself a saint because I abstain? No, I must examine my inclinations closely, and I shall soon discover those I have to combat. Suppose a man absorbed like Archimedes in his meditations; remarking nothing in the world around him; careless on the subject of fortune; indifferent to those honours so ardently desired by other men; would you honour him, on that account, for his moderation? If you examine him closely, you will perhaps find that this same Archimedes, whom you believed solely occupied with the interests of truth, is only working to establish his own reputation. His regeneration, therefore, will not consist in detaching his heart from the love of wealth or lucrative posts, but in correcting his secret pride and vain-glory.

Mr. Tessier.—Thus, when we examine attentively the commandments of God, we must say to ourselves: "There is one which concerns me, and I must direct my labours to that point." To believe ourselves regenerated, because such or such a vice possesses no attractions for us, is a complete absurdity. The vices of the soul are like the windows of a house; one alone is sufficient to admit the enemy, and that is the one we ought to close hermetically. We did well to pause on this point in passing, for it is only from these explanations that I have got a clear idea of regeneration. Thus I see plainly that we are only united to God by loving him. But since we must do everything from love, and since it is only thus that we can approach God, can you tell me now what is meant by the fear of God? This word fear produces a painful impression on me. I should not wish to approach a father trembling; and, in my own case, I have always recommended my son to do nothing from fear. I wish him to love

and respect me. If he feared me, he would avoid me when he saw me approach, a mode of proceeding which would give me but little gratification.

Mr. Lanoue.—By the fear of God is not meant the fear that he inspires ; wisdom and love are his only attributes. This fear is that which we should entertain of being insensible to his love. A man, when suddenly raised by the goodness of another to the summit of happiness, is apprehensive of being unable to retain his place. Ah ! how he fears to offend his benefactor ! When you have gained the love of any one whose affection fills your life with unutterable happiness, do you not fear to lose this love ?

Mr. Tessier.—You have painted the future life in colours so attractive, that I now fear to lose it. I am also sensible now that I fear to offend the God who bestows it on me, to lose the sole affection which gives life all its value ; and this fear awakens instead of destroying love.

Mr. Lanoue.—But I go farther, and I say that Paradise is not to be won by outward forms, but by a pious life ; that is so clear that I should insult your good sense by insisting farther on it.

Mr. Tessier.—It is as clear as the light of the sun that if God is not with us, the Devil must be. But tell me, although a man who is carried away by the flood-tide of his passions on this earth, has not strength enough to correct himself, will he not immediately reform when his eyes are opened, when the veil which covers them falls—in short, when the realities of the future life are substituted for the illusions of the present ?

Mr. Lanoue.—It is a great error to suppose that when we see the naked truth, we yield to it from the force of moral evidence ! The light of intellect, as has been already said, is not capable of leading back the will which has gone astray. Though we see the truth, and even acknowledge it, we have not always moral strength enough to follow it. We are governed by our passions, not by the convictions of the intellect. We never yield to reason under any circumstances, unless we have overcome our ruling passion ; and if this passion still predominates in the other world, if it continues to govern men there as it does here, how can we avoid sinking into the abyss ?

Mr. Tessier.—True ; even a rogue praises sincerity, but see if he is the less a hypocrite ? I can understand now why Jesus says, that he who commits sin is the slave of sin ! We are no doubt free to resist or to yield to it ; but so soon as we commit sin, it takes hold of us, and we cannot without difficulty disengage ourselves. The practice of good, on the contrary, seems at first to be a sort of slavery, but when once we

accustom ourselves to it, we feel our heart at ease. We must be entirely devoid of understanding if we do not now understand those other words of Christ: If the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed. Oh! how free we are when we live under the dominion of truth, when we are frank with ourselves and others! Yes, sin is slavery, and righteousness is the only real freedom. Nevertheless I maintain that although we are tempted upon earth by this fleshly body, we shall be detached from all that made us fall into evil when these material organs are reduced to dust, and then, no longer subject to temptation, we shall cease to sin. Then our soul, as pure as light, will soar of itself, by the laws of the Omnipotent, towards its eternal source.

Mr. Lanoue.— I recognise from your figurative expressions, another of those objections which you have gathered in the course of your studies; and I can see that you have read not a little, Mr. Tessier. But this envelope of clay is not man, is it? The soul which animates the clay is man, alone. There is within us an internal man making use of the external one as an instrument; the first alone can merit punishment or deserve reward, the second is a poor machine with no power of its own. We must leave off sinning if we wish to be saved; and although the body is the medium through which we fall into transgression, it is not the body that is culpable. If any one strikes you with a rod, you are not angry at the rod, but at the person. It is the soul, or spiritual body, my friend, which frames a purpose and determines on it; and it will retain the same office in the other world. It will still search out what it loves, though it no longer possesses the same organs. Do you not observe, upon our earth, that science goes in pursuit of science, that vice likewise seeks vice? Flesh and blood are not the principles of our sensations; in asserting this you adopt the empty visions of the materialists, who, overturning the real heavens, make a second after their own fashion, which bursts in their hands like a soap-bubble.

Mr. Tessier.—But, bless me, Mr. Lanoue, I shall never recover from my astonishment. I was chatting the other day with a materialist, who argued with me as I have just now argued with you. He told me that nothing enters into the mind of man but the ideas acquired by the senses. My memory immediately suggested to me this reply of some philosopher: nothing enters into man but through the senses—except the mind itself. Yes, Mr. Lanoue, the mind comes down from above already formed, and the senses are its workmen. It is too clear for us to hesitate for a moment about it. This life of goodness and wickedness continuing in the future life as it does here, notwithstanding the transformation of our bodies, is a magnificent idea, and explains to me those words

of St. Paul, which I never before could understand: "Behold, I show you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." St. Paul only announces the mystery, but I find it explained by you. Do you know that this theory, which teaches that man punishes or recompenses himself, without his being predestinated to heaven or hell, pleases me greatly? I have met with nothing so satisfactory: by this theory you may, as it were, feel your pulse yourself.

Mr. Lanoue.—Add, that you may also know by this means what sort of life conducts to heaven; conscience is an excellent instructor. We are all, as men of the world, honest people externally, and were we all taken for what we appear, without any regard to the inner man, we should all probably go to heaven.

Mr. Tessier.—Not to the heaven of Fenelon, I fancy.

Mr. Lanoue.—Jesus has told us that in his Father's house there are many mansions; you see, in fact, that there are as many places there as there are affections, since it is the latter that constitute celestial life.

Mr. Tessier.—I did not expect that! Then the other world is varied like our own! I might have known, indeed, that as creative wisdom never repeats its works on earth, neither does it repeat them in the immaterial world. What a beautiful thought this is! I shall have my heaven there as on earth, I have the sphere of my affections from which I never wish to wander. In fact, opposite affections are strangers to each other; those only which have some resemblance can be combined so as to form a whole. When I speak of the affections being strangers to each other, I mean that they look at things in a different manner, that they are in a different heaven. Oh! how far that leads us, Mr. Lanoue! How I delight to travel with you into realms which really are not imaginary.

Mr. Lanoue.—Yes, but in these lofty excursions there is some danger of our forgetting the life that leads to heaven, and that is the principal matter. Listen to me—

Mr. Tessier.—Allow me to pause for a moment on what I have just heard. Oh! Mr. Lanoue, you do not know the good it does me; but I shall tell you. All the ideas which I formerly entertained of the other world were so marvellous and incomprehensible, that instead of making me devout, they almost turned my head whenever I reflected on them. But with you the marvellous is almost intelligible, your invisible is almost natural; and the mind, taking courage, approaches it without alarm, until at last, instead of believing with our imagination we believe with our reason. But if I cannot originate truth, I am a perfect store-house of objections, and here is another which your theory totally removes.

Mr. Lanoue.—What is it?

Mr. Tessier.—The eternity of punishments—the point which most of all alarms philosophers. They cannot believe in God, because they are told that the Deity punishes men for a momentary weakness by an eternity of sufferings.

Mr. Lanoue.—Well! what do you think of that yourself?

Mr. Tessier.—I think that the divine mercy cannot inspire a being with a love which he does not wish to possess, without totally changing, or in other words annihilating him; it must therefore permit the wicked to precipitate themselves of their own accord into hell, to remain there so long as their affections are not changed.

Mr. Lanoue.—You see that as the ruling love cannot be changed forcibly, the suffering which it carries with it must endure as long as itself. Observe besides, in passing, that our ideas of time disappear in the other life. The other life is a condition which has no time. The expectation of any end is an idea which cannot then present itself to the mind.

Mr. Tessier.—But, Mr. Lanoue, if a devil repented and changed his evil passions for others purer and better, would he not ascend to heaven?

Mr. Lanoue.—This life is the scene of probation; when the love which is to form the life of a man has once entered into his heart, reformation is no longer possible. It is on earth that man becomes regenerate; it is here that every modification takes place. In the future state everything remains, that is, after man has taken his determination; for there is some time necessary for the good to free themselves from alloy, as there is for the evil to get rid of the few scruples which still restrain them on earth from being complete devils.

Mr. Tessier.—But that is purgatory. At all events, it explains to me these words in the gospel, which formerly seemed to me so inconceivable, or rather so contradictory: "To him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not shall be taken away, even that which he hath." In fact, the good man will acquire still more goodness, and the wicked will lose even the appearance of the good which he feigned to possess.

Mr. Lanoue.—Purgatory, or a state of expiation, has been adopted in all religions, with more or less truth, and with more or less abuse. In a doctrine which teaches that man contains within himself either heaven or hell, purgatory ought to be a preparatory state into which it is necessary to pass on leaving life. The union of God and man cannot take place in a moment; a progression is necessary before a man can arrive at the just equilibrium between the understanding which sees, and the love which desires. The inclinations of every man follow him to the future life. Now, at the moment of death, no one is either a consummate villain or an angel of innocence. It is necessary either to mount or fall; but when that is once

accomplished, love is no longer susceptible of being reformed. It would require another scene of action; and if that were the case, creation would be eternally recommencing without ever terminating.

Mr. Tessier.—I lost my poor father some years ago; he was an excellent man, but one who no doubt had still to get rid of a certain alloy before going direct to heaven. He must therefore labour in this preparatory world all alone; my prayers can do nothing for him.

Mr. Lanoue.—Prayer acts on him from whose lips it is breathed forth; it leads man closer to his Maker; it unites and blends the desires of hearts that are separated by distance and death. In this way, in my opinion, souls may grow better; they may mutually assist each other to reach the presence of God; but to believe that God will be induced by the solicitation of a third party to raise to heaven the man who would not otherwise have reached it, is a monstrous fiction, which I cannot entertain for a moment. A letter of recommendation from a friend is often sufficient to procure one a favourable reception; but will God act thus? Will he change his laws at our solicitation? Will he give the prize of virtue to him who has done nothing to deserve it?

Mr. Tessier.—But why then pray to the saints?

Mr. Lanoue.—Upon earth, truth and virtue are not created such by royal command and with sound of trumpet; they make themselves what they are. In the other life I imagine that God recognises as saints not those who are proclaimed as such in one way or other, but those who approach him nearest by a more perfect self-denial. There is no other means of approaching God. As it is only by parting with their impurer portions that weighty bodies rise from earth, so it is by freeing themselves from their earthly passions that spirits mount to heaven. I believe that the souls which are nearest to God are the kind and tender, who perhaps had not even the honour of possessing a pew in the parish church. Their unknown virtues obtain an honour equally unknown. If those be the beings you wish to take for your patrons, they will at once refuse your homage, and say that the glory appertains to God alone. Your praises would make them fly, because they would fear, in receiving them, to entertain a certain regard for self, at the expense of humility and self-denial. In the second place, what can they do as simple intercessors? They cannot change the supreme laws; they cannot do your work. To expect that would be an absurdity; you must yourself seek divine life from God, for God is the only fountain of love.

Mr. Tessier.—I have always heard that it is better to address yourself to God than to the saints. It is our individual

love on which all depends. But if the devil enjoys his ruling passion in the future life, he must be perfectly at his ease; he has what he desires, and that is no punishment.

Mr. Lanoue.—We shall resume this subject another day. You are, I presume, neither depraved enough to go direct to hell, nor sufficiently pure to enter without difficulty into Paradise. If you died at present, and if you were taken in the condition in which you are, I fancy that you would be in the intermediate world of which I have spoken. I leave you there to undergo a purification. This world, Mr. Tessier, is the life in which amendment is to be accomplished. If you reflect well on the laws by which it is directed, you will have before your eyes the duties required by regeneration. Act so on earth that all will be finished when you ascend on high.

Mr. Tessier.—But since a means of reformation still exists in the future life, the slothful man may tell you that there is no necessity for haste.

Mr. Lanoue.—If he knows that he ought to reform, he is without excuse if he neglects to do so; his refusal proves of itself that love is wanting. If he delay to accomplish his regeneration, under the pretext that he has time enough, he will act like the libertine who defers his reformation till the arrival of age. Age comes on, and finds the man still the same. He who delays the accomplishment of a duty which he knows, is culpable. Who will assert that the affection which you have stifled here, will rekindle above with a power which you cannot resist? Alas! you will be just the same; nor can I conceive that the habits which you have here acquired of yielding to your passions, will give you new strength above. Begin the work here, and you will continue the warfare of regeneration in the intermediate world. But if you are dastard enough to defer this task, I cannot see how a cowardice which you confess, and yet dare not combat here, is to be suddenly transformed into a courageous resistance there. God will not perform a miracle in your favour which would be really destroying you; he will give you time, but not another soul. The sluggard waits till some one transports him elsewhere; but God, who has given him organs of locomotion, will leave him where he sits. We must make our destiny ourselves; and if we knowingly put off our exertions till to-morrow, the morrow will find us in the same dispositions that we are in to-day.

Mr. Tessier.—Undoubtedly, Mr. Lanoue; and in order to profit by your lessons, I shall try to commence to-day the reformation necessary for my salvation.

SIXTH CONVERSATION.

MAN MAKES HIS OWN HEAVEN AND HELL.

LOVE, whether pure or depraved, shaping out its own destiny appeared to the notary the happiest means in the world of absolving the judgments of Providence from the charge of caprice or tyranny. But as this love is satisfied when it obtains what it desires, Mr. Tessier could not see how to avoid concluding that the devils were not punished, and only obtained in the other life what they had proposed to themselves as the object of their exertions. This problem occupied him to such an extent, that he could not imagine how Mr. Lanoue would ever succeed in solving it. "Is not love," said he, abruptly addressing the latter on their next meeting, "the very life of man? Is it not his element? When he loves, is he not like a fish in the water?"

Mr. Lanoue.—Undoubtedly, Mr. Tessier; the end at which we are aiming is always that which we desire. This end being unceasingly present to the thoughts and to the affections, we may conclude that love itself forms the life of man.

Mr. Tessier.—But the devil has also his affections in a future life.

Mr. Lanoue.—No doubt of it. God cannot infuse into any being, by force, a different love from that which animates him. That would be to destroy his liberty.

Mr. Tessier.—But if a wicked man constitutes his own hell, and his affections be centred there, I do not see why he is to be pitied; he has what he loves. Oh, Mr. Lanoue, take care; in your endeavours to create a philosophical heaven, you will at last come to take from the wicked man the only curb which can restrain him. How will you persuade him to avoid hell, if his affections be gratified there? You assert that a man makes his own lot, either one deserving punishment or one deserving reward, and nothing can be more reasonable; but your explanation is not very likely to restrain the vicious man. In good truth, I do not see anything for such people but flames and tortures.

Mr. Lanoue.—I will never adopt the maxim that we must deceive men in order to lead them. Truth has enough of attraction in itself to induce them to love it. Its absence is a prospect sufficiently terrible to punish him who has allowed it to die out in his heart. Do you believe that the fire of hate is a very consoling condition? Try to experience it even for a day, in all its exasperation, and you will see if it be a very easy pillow to rest your head upon. You are not wicked enough to have known the tortures of devouring envy; nor do I wish that you ever should. But if you did, you would not say that it was a pleasant companion. Insensible

to the bliss of real love, the wicked are consumed by that impure fire which pollutes the imagination. The darkness of error—of obstinate error—there takes the place of the light of truth, and a mad-house would seem to you a less frightful abode than a hell peopled by beings who have never known the delights of truth. I grow dizzy at the bare thought of it. Picture to yourself deceived ambition, dreaming of a throne which shall never arrive; science greedily grasping a glory which vanishes even before the man is dead; pride never satisfied, and powerless to correct itself. Do you find such a dwelling very tempting?

Mr. Tessier.—It strikes me with horror. What a society do you present to me! Close this sink of abomination, and let us speak of the life which leads to heaven.

Mr. Lanoue.—It is my turn to stop you. Observe the cause of that eternity of suffering of which you have caught a glimpse. Go and try to persuade those devils to change their lives; they will throw themselves upon you like so many harpies. They are there with their own consent, and they have no wish to be elsewhere. You believe that they must feel a horror of their life—by no means; it is yours that they hate. All their torments cannot detach them from their horrible love. Have you ever seen passions which have burst the chain of reason, arrested in their career? There is no means of doing so. Once the limits of wisdom and moderation are passed, blind Passion overleaps every restraint. The most poignant wounds only irritate the wretch who has advanced so far, instead of making him pause in his career. He dashes, like a wounded horse, upon the spear which pierces him. Obstinacy, even in things which are injurious to us, is the consequence of depraved affection. Lastly, consider with yourself what Anger is; does it ever listen to reason—does it ever yield to conscience? The more it raves, and the more it lashes itself, the more obstinately it perseveres. In this world anger passes away, but in the other it is durable.

Mr. Tessier.—In mercy stop. Without the application of material fire, you terrify me when I think on the life of the wicked. However I have read somewhere, I do not know whether in Milton or not, that there is ice in hell; at least, he represents the devils freezing with cold, on issuing from the flames of hell. As this torment does not cause me so much terror as the other, tell me if it really exists.

Mr. Lanoue.—When selfishness and profligacy consume us with their raging flames, and when the pure images of devotion and chastity present themselves to our imagination, a revolution instantly takes place in our soul—our immoderate heat gives place to a sensation which freezes us to the very marrow of our bones. We are all fire when under the domi-

nion of our passions; but when the opposite images are presented to our minds, we become icy cold. The sight of virtue petrifies us like the head of Medusa. Thus the wicked are all on fire for what is horrible and disgusting; it is only when in the presence of pure love and innocent virtue that this fire abandons them.

Mr. Tessier.—Oh, the monsters! Let us leave them there. Your hell is too probable not to be acknowledged as true by every one. There is not one of us who has not known on earth some such devils, burning with all the impure passions, and cold as marble to all the virtuous sentiments. Let us change the subject; I long to breathe a purer atmosphere.

Mr. Lanoue.—I have told you that there is but one means of attaining to heaven, and that is to be, in heart and soul, such as we appear outwardly when we lead a tolerably good life. To do good is the duty of man in society, but when this duty becomes delightful to us we belong forthwith to heaven. Man shall obtain after his death that which he has loved on earth, and shall enjoy that happiness which duty faithfully accomplished ever brings with it. Is not that very simple? To do your duty you require to practise a little constraint. Well, if this restraint is voluntary and not hypocritical, you are in heaven; you make your own happiness in this life and in the next. I know no greater punishment than to be unceasingly in contradiction with one's self; but is not that the case with hypocrites? Love, on the contrary, has not this struggle to maintain. It is the same without as within; it does not fear to let any word escape which can betray it. It is a stream for which we are at first obliged to dig a bed, but after that is done we have only to leave it to flow of itself.

Mr. Tessier.—How easily you explain all that to me. It is just as Jesus says: "My yoke is easy and my burden is light." In short one only requires to be an honest man in reality, in place of being content with merely appearing such. Thus there is in the future state neither reward nor punishment, properly so called. The idea of a reward only excites cupidity; that of punishment only restrains by terror. Free love, which is the true essence of man, has nothing to do with either. There will be either happiness or misery; that is all simple. Every being must exist according to his nature. But if that be all that is necessary in order to attain to heaven, then there is no need of fasting and abstinence.

Mr. Lanoue.—Sobriety and temperance are useless recommendations to the regenerated man; he will feel naturally what it is necessary to do in this respect. Jesus has told us to mortify our passions. The words which I have spoken to you, he says, are life and spirit. The flesh serves no purpose.

Mr. Tessier.—He says, also, that it is not that which enters

into the body which defiles it ; but that which cometh out of it. Notwithstanding, Jesus fasted.

Mr. Lanoue.—As we ought to do ourselves, in order to lay aside the old Adam, and clothe ourselves with the new man. Fasting is the privation of that which our natural selfishness recommends to us.

Mr. Tessier.—But is there not a real fasting acknowledged by all the interpreters of the Bible?

Mr. Lanoue.—The body has sometimes need of a certain regimen, in order that our moral nature may shine forth with more splendour. But this is a natural, not a divine discipline. It was practised by certain sages of antiquity, who were better informed than we are in the present day as to the secrets of our twofold nature. The soul is fortified at the expense of the body ; for the vigour of the latter is sometimes opposed to the well-being of the understanding. It is not in rising from a copious repast that the head is clearest. In bodily privation there is a just attention to the economy of the earthly machine ; but that tends to the amendment of the heart only when the will is reformed.

Mr. Tessier.—And what of confession?

Mr. Lanoue.—If we wish to become regenerated, we should confess all our sins to God. We should confess them, not in order to apprise him of their existence, because he knows everything, but in order that we may cleanse ourselves from them directly, and without inward dissimulation. We must repent of them afterwards. Without repentance—that is, without feeling pain for having committed the sin—we are disposed to commit it again.

Mr. Tessier.—But I allude to confession to a priest.

Mr. Lanoue.—Such confession is purely natural. Spiritual confession made to God is the only essential one.

Mr. Tessier.—But who gives absolution?

Mr. Lanoue.—The conscience is the best adviser. It never deceives the man who becomes regenerate : in fact, it alone tells us whether we repent or not. It, consequently, knows if we are in a state of grace or if we are not.

Mr. Tessier.—Oh ! for that matter, I am convinced you are right. I shall never become white as snow, merely because a man stretches out his hand over me. No one knows so well as myself whether I love God or whether I encourage unholy desires. This conscience that absolves itself is a grand idea ! Do not be afraid either that this absolution will be too easily obtained. If we pass the sponge with little scruple over our faults, we have no conscience ; if conscience really exists within us, it soon makes its presence felt. It is more exacting than man. It was very convenient formerly to believe ourselves pure as angels, because we had received absolution. At pre-

sent, we cannot conceal from ourselves that if we do not wish to feel the load of crime, the only plan is to lay it down. But in that case there is no remission of sin.

Mr. Lanoue.—What we term the remission of sin is really the removal of sin. When we feel a horror of sin, it seems to us, in fact, that our sins are remitted; but you see distinctly that they are not, for these sins may return on the first opportunity. To efface the stain of sin in reality, it must be effaced by ourselves.

Mr. Tessier.—But if this be true, there is no necessity for the theologians. We need not fear to lose the right path, for it is perfectly plain. The conscience of the guilty man condemns him inwardly. If he deny it, he is a liar; for this voice is heard by every man who struggles with himself.

Mr. Lanoue.—You now perceive which way it is that leads to heaven; and to return to our first proposition, whatever renders man happy on earth makes him happy in heaven likewise. The happiness arising from virtue enables us to form a perfect idea of the felicity of the elect, in the abode which they shall inherit. The human heart is the same there as here; God does not create it twice. Such metamorphoses only take place in fables. Between God and man there is no barrier interposed: it is man who approaches or removes himself from his First Principle. God will not take away our impure passions by his mercy, to make us dwell with him in the celestial abode; he leaves us the capacity of destroying them. If he interfered in this work, we should defend ourselves against him; we should lock up in our inmost heart the love of which he seeks to deprive us, as a child presses to his bosom the animal which we try to remove from him, however vicious and dangerous the favourite may be.

Mr. Tessier.—I shall never forget what you have just told me. In fact, if all this be true, I do not see why we should fear death; the last day of our life ought to be the happiest.

Mr. Lanoue.—Yes; but to the virtuous man alone. If everlasting error be the most horrible punishment to the man who thirsts for knowledge, how pleasing to the eye which is worthy of contemplating it must be eternal truth shining unclouded in heaven! What we see here only dimly visible through thick clouds is there revealed in the light of day. If admiration be one of the most noble enjoyments of man, you must feel how great is the delight of him who, filled with enthusiasm in the pursuit of knowledge, is transported to the source of all laws, to the explanation of every phenomenon.

Mr. Tessier.—That is an enjoyment for the learned; but what delight have the unlettered and simple?

Mr. Lanoue.—They have the charm of innocence, the most delightful condition of life. This enjoyment, which so soon

fades and dies on earth, is perennial in heaven. Reposing on God, innocence advances to love, guided by love itself. Innocence feels God, as it were, praying within itself; and those transporting extasies of genius when it believes that it feels another soul within its own, are experienced by innocence without alloy, and with an irresistible delight, for this other soul which animates it with new life is God himself. Simplicity of heart! What a boundless source of happiness!

Mr. Tessier.—I now feel the force of the declaration of Jesus, that the kingdom of heaven is destined for those who resemble children in innocence. All men regard their infancy as the happiest period of their lives—the age of innocence! That is a heaven of which the lamb is a suitable emblem. You, Mr. Lanoue, are always provided with quotations from Scripture and sacred figures, of which I comprehend nothing. I am delighted to be your pupil; but is there nothing to do in heaven except to admire and love? No doubt they are the most pleasing enjoyments of man; but it seems to me that duty should precede enjoyment, and repose follow labour. What can be the occupation of happy spirits? Surely not to sing psalms unceasingly; an hour of such a life would fatigue me to death.

Mr. Lanoue.—And what is your employment here, Mr. Tessier? You surely do not imagine that it is scribbling on paper? Your real occupation is the exercise of the understanding, carried into effect indeed by your hands, and prompted by the species of love that guides you. It is to support yourself and your family that your arms are put in movement; but suppose there were no material substance to occupy them, would the moral faculties which employ them cease on that account to act? Would you be content to live without your affections and without your thoughts?

Mr. Tessier.—No, certainly; the angels must live and act, although they are not composed of matter.

Mr. Lanoue.—The angels insinuate themselves, no doubt, into the virtuous affections which we feel within us, and which render us better; they cultivate the human soul, as a plant which is to yield fruits for immortality. They live by means of a love received and communicated. That idea includes all existence.

Mr. Tessier.—I like this idea better than to suppose them occupied in propelling the comets and planets, as we used to be told. But tell me, shall we meet, see, and recognise each other in heaven?

Mr. Lanoue.—Do your thoughts recognise the persons with whom you sympathise? Yes, they are always present with you, while others, though in your immediate neighbourhood, never offer themselves to your mental vision. Can it be

otherwise in heaven? Has the mind two laws? Has the Creator two different measures? Do not the excursive flights of our intellect on earth foreshadow those of our souls above? We can form to ourselves here below a region of delight in imagination, and we must lose this privilege in the empire of thought itself, when freed from the laws of the body, and just when we are associated with those that resemble us?

Mr. Tessier.—But where shall we be? how is the other world constructed?

Mr. Lanoue.—Where are we when we indulge in a pleasing reverie? Everywhere and nowhere, since we are out of the bounds of time and space. Everywhere for the soul, nowhere for the corporeal organ. What shall we see, do you say? Can we see anything except the manifestations of our sentiments and ideas? Will Nature, subjected as she is to the laws of the Almighty, show us anything but her revealed thought? Our cities, our public buildings, our arts, what are they, if not our affections and intellect assuming a form? These forms on earth are fixed, because they are identified with matter; but in heaven they are in some degree instantaneous and spontaneous, because they are beyond the realms of time and space. In what circumstances shall we be placed? That is the grand question. The circumstances will be those which our love and affection have already established for us. These circumstances or relations are in this world purely material, and in a future state purely spiritual in their nature.

Mr. Tessier.—You will turn my brain if you go on; you lead me farther than any poem or treatise on philosophy that I have ever read. But I come to the principal point: if we be still susceptible of loving, can we unite ourselves anew to those whom we have loved on earth? When a wife parts from her husband here below, how often does she not say to him: "We shall meet in heaven?" What do you think of that expectation? Are there marriages in heaven? That would be an odd idea. And yet I should be sorry to tell affectionate husbands and wives that they indulge in a delusion. If this be a delusion, it should not be destroyed.

Mr. Lanoue.—The hopes of the heart are rarely delusions; they are instincts which foreshadow that which really exists. We have seen that the moral faculties—the concord of which produces a harmonious whole, and which are so distributed that one always possesses in abundance what another is deficient in—constitute, before everything, man and woman. The devoted affections of woman will require in the future life, as they do on earth, the sublime thoughts of man to rectify and guide them. Man will require the pure flame of a wife's affection to warm his soul. In commencing a new existence,

we only lose the illusions of the old; we still preserve its sentiments. Two hearts truly united form but one. There is no time for the soul. Why should pure love die out in man, since it is the love which emanates from God that commenced and that carries on the creation. There is no crime in love; it is innocent before God, and he will no doubt preserve it. The soul must cease to exist if love be extinguished.

Mr. Tessier.—What softness, what tenderness, Mr. Lanoue. Ah! I feel what you say so deeply because I am a husband; your words pierce my inmost heart. How rich and consoling is this love, which shall have the glorious privilege of burning in the presence of God himself! And God approves, and says to man: "Thou hast loved on earth, thy recompense shall be love beyond the tomb." It is at the altar that marriage takes place, and will God, in whose presence it was formed, be offended if man seeks to prolong a union formed under his auspices?

Mr. Lanoue.—Why should this desire always accompany that of surviving? Do not two young hearts promise each other to meet again never to part? Our frivolous age is too apt to ridicule these promises, but they are natural, since man abuses them. Permit man to revel in voluptuousness and he will soon be satiated; in heaven itself such happiness would soon pall on him. But if he loves he is satisfied. It is the only pleasure of which we never tire. It is the only want that does not bring satiety in its train.

Mr. Tessier.—But, Mr. Lanoue, you are only quoting here the language of Virginia, when she asks of her dear Paul to love her for ever. How pure and chaste would not love be if uttered by the lips of Virginia! Ah, yes, life is sweeter in heaven than on earth! There love is religion, Mr. Lanoue. You were the first to tell me that. I do not know where you have formed these ideas, but in what you have told me there is more absolutely new than in all that I have read for twenty years past. But Jesus tells us plainly that there will be no marriages in heaven. How do you get over that?

Mr. Lanoue.—You know that Scripture contains, from one end to the other, an allegorical sense, which makes it appear to speak a different language from the real one. In heaven there will no longer be any marriage possible between the understanding and the will of man, as you saw just now, when we proved that there would be no more reform possible. At present you recollect that the understanding is the man or the husband, and the will is the woman or the wife.

Mr. Tessier.—Is not the simile too far-fetched?

Mr. Lanoue.—When you are familiar with the Scripture, and the symbolical sense, of which I have given you some examples, this will appear to you as clear as day. You will see

that the marriage spoken of by our Saviour can no more signify a natural marriage than the heaven and the earth of which Moses speaks, can mean the terrestrial globe and the celestial firmament. The spiritual sense once admitted, it is absolutely necessary to interpret everthing by the same rule; you have no right to adopt it here and to reject it elsewhere.

Mr. Tessier.—But this condition of life supposes a state of things which requires accompanying objects and forms. What are these objects? You must recollect the jest of Scarron, who represents in the Elysian fields the shade of a coachman, who, with the shade of a brush, rubs the shade of a carriage.

Mr. Lanoue.—Our future existence cannot be a metaphysical abstraction. There must be palpable forms of life, substantial images of our affections and thoughts. Without this the other life would be a chimera, and the life which God has reserved for himself could be only an illusion. Nature, always consistent with herself, and doing nothing by capricious starts, must be exactly consistent in the future state with her operations on earth; only that instead of being material as here, she is spiritual—instead of being dead, she is living. When we enter the condition most nearly approaching immaterial existence, I mean sleep, so justly styled by poets the twin sister of death, do we not see with the eyes of thought a world peopled with forms?

Mr. Tessier.—But it is the memory which recalls those forms: we perceive nothing but what we have seen before.

Mr. Lanoue.—Say, rather, that we perceive nothing that does not exist. Everything that you see is conformable to that which you have met with in your existence here below; but who will say that there is anything else in the world of causes than figures and emblems of the material one? The Creator has, no doubt, only created once, and for both worlds. These forms are so little the creations of memory, that there are conditions of sleep, such as that of artificial somnambulism, where the memory of the impressions received in the waking state is entirely extinguished. Others, on the contrary, on awaking, can furnish no clue to what has passed in the sleep of the body. It is a sleep so little dependent on the past, that it pierces into the future; and of this, antiquity gives us many examples. When the soul is detached from the body, it inhabits the immaterial region, and passes through the midst of forms and substances which are not the less real because they are fleeting. Duration has nothing to do in the matter.

Mr. Tessier.—So, then, the other life is a dream. I am sorry for it!

Mr. Lanoue.—Make your mind easy. Were the state of dreaming our usual condition, who could say that there was any other state possible to us? The other life is an ecstasy,

a dream, a vision, if you will; but it is the eternal condition of life. This condition in which we exist is only an accident. To dispute as to the evidence furnished by those two states, is disputing to no purpose. We do not know every kind of dreams. There are some in which our confused and embarrassed sensations seem to plunge us in a sort of stupor; there are others in which the senses, lulled to slumber, permit the soul to distinguish its perceptions clearly, and to feel itself warmed by a love, and enlightened by a truth, far beyond what is experienced in the ordinary relations of life. Those dreams which approach more nearly to spiritual existence may aid us, therefore, to comprehend the nature of the latter; and this state is, perhaps, the universal mode of existence, the primitive condition of human life, to which we partially return when our body is in a state of inaction. Our imperfect sensations in sleep put us on the way of this existence, without conducting us to it completely. Then we comprehend material objects, spiritual bodies, scenes which pass in apparent space, which concentrate in one point the successions of time. A dream which takes infinity and eternity as its basis can be no idle imagination. On the contrary, absolute, universal reality would be its characteristic.

Mr. Tessier.—That I do not see very clearly; but how can one see in the waking state that which sleep alone enables us to perceive? It is enough if the latter be conformable to the laws of those perceptions.

Mr. Lanoue.—Lay aside this prejudice which looks on the state of dreaming as a series of unmeaning impressions; it is a peculiar existence, and one which has its laws, like the waking condition. Our modern philosophers have not yet given their attention to these phenomena; but the ancients, who were more attentive observers, in general considered dreams as impressions frequently resulting from spiritual existence. Homer, who may be taken as the interpreter of the sentiments of his time, says that dreams descend from Jupiter. The prophets were warned in dreams. Objects which resemble those we see every day, are visible to us in these mental excursions which we call dreams, and accompany us likewise in the spiritual existence on which we enter after death. To decide on the nature of the substances which then present themselves to our mind is beyond the province of our five senses. The term dream is a generic word, comprehending many different species. Our sleep is one of these species, the future life is a second. The first takes place in time, the latter belongs to eternity.

Mr. Tessier.—Were I to puzzle my brain all my life, I should never succeed in comprehending that clearly.

Mr. Lanoue.—In that case, turn to account those things

which you have comprehended. You now know what you have to do. The knowledge of mysteries is useless to you. Heaven, you have admitted, is very easy to reach; a single precept opens the way to you. You do not now require a mass of books to insure your celestial felicity. You do not require to follow in the footsteps of all the critics, trembling lest a book should one day appear, and rob you of Paradise. This Paradise is within you, if you wish; and you can hold or let it go at choice. It does not depend on the discoveries, more or less plausible, of the sceptic. The sceptic cannot prove to you that you are not thoroughly and sincerely regenerated, if you wish it. Man, who passes away like a shadow, will never be able to take from you the hope of that other life—a hope which it depends on yourself to change into certainty by your own experience. You have now a moral theory sufficient for all your wants. You are fully convinced that no one can be an honest man without religion; you have demonstrated to your satisfaction this fundamental truth of Christianity; you find the strongest proof of it in yourself. Your experience shows you that you are in evil, that the redemption alone can conduct you to good. Armed with those proofs, you can destroy all petty objections. To you, Christianity, considered as a moral fact which has its origin and its evidence in the conscience, is something tangible, which you do not require to have attested by men in remote ages. In fact, for you it is the same as if it had occurred yesterday. You have now only to guard against being led away by vain curiosity. You have all that you require in order to be a useful citizen; would you exchange this character for that of a peevish fault-finder, more anxious to know than to practise? It is not what we know that renders us better; it is what we do, with the view of promoting the public good. The devil is also, no doubt, deeply skilled in science and knowledge; but is he the better for knowing those mysteries of which the simple man who has an honest will is ignorant? Your general objection to the incomprehensible things in the divine book is in part destroyed. What more do you desire? You may rest upon the assurance that there is a profound emblematical sense in those things which you do not understand literally. Is this not enough to quiet the murmurs of your intellect? To what good end will idle curiosity conduct you? Observe that true love sleeps peacefully, pillowed on the bosom of Providence; while the Spirit of Darkness, an example of which I have quoted to you, is represented in Scripture as wandering in high places without ever finding repose. These high places, my dear friend, are those intellectual difficulties which you wish at all risks to fathom, notwithstanding that you have everything which you at present require to render you good and happy. You will,

perhaps, tell me that the very fact of there being a mystery in the Sacred Volume is sufficient to re-awaken all your doubts. Take care that in holding this language you do not deceive yourself. You are surrounded by the phenomena of external nature, which are equally incomprehensible, and yet you do not puzzle your brain about them. You know that, generally speaking, there are many things which men more learned than yourself can explain satisfactorily, and you trust to their ingenious systems, without attempting to form a better one of your own. Is it not enough to know that the so-called absurdities of the Sacred Book have been also satisfactorily explained by men of higher attainments than yourself? Why, then, should you torture your mind with them? Your salvation is not dependant on the idea which you form of these mysteries, but to the application in this life of the fundamental truths which you now comprehend so fully. By your own confession, you are dwelling in sin; reform, then, with the aid furnished you by the Gospel. Be contented to remain in ignorance of many things, since it is the lot of humanity; limit your desires to love and prayer, since we can always gratify them when we wish. Do not, my dear Mr. Tessier, neglect to pray. Prayer elevates you to God, and regenerates you by this very elevation. Religion must enter the mind by the proofs which reason offers, but it can enter the heart only by divine grace. What religion teaches you of God is, that he has come to save man by his mercy. Have recourse, then, to religion. Faith alone is powerless for salvation. Do not mistake your imagination for your heart. When you have acquired an exact knowledge of religion, make it a feeling, a principle of life. It is only when religion reaches this stage that it is stable and unwavering. We may be enthusiastic for the truth, but this enthusiasm is legitimate only when it leads us to love and practise it. Pray, then. At such a moment you will be no longer alone. You would formerly have replied to him who recommended you to pray, that God having provided for you all that is necessary, to ask him for anything else would be to call on him to derange, for your sake, the order established by his wisdom. You now know that in praying to him you request him, on the contrary, to re-establish the order which has been deranged. You pray to him, not to solicit him for those things which pass away, and which give an additional incentive to self-love, but you pray to him for that assistance which you require to save yourself from your passions. When lifting up your heart to him, entreat him to destroy in you the old Adam—to replace his own banished image in your heart; and when you become the image of God upon earth, my dear friend, when you become just and benevolent like him, your heart will be sufficiently filled with the sentiments of love to

prevent you from seeking with the same avidity the mysteries of the intellect. Acknowledge in the presence of your Regenerator that you are only a poor sinner ; confess to him all the grovelling inclinations which are concealed in the secret recesses of your heart ; prostrate at his feet those vain ideas on which your daring imagination feeds ; or rather content yourself with repeating the sublime prayer which he himself has taught us. In calling him "our Father," recollect that you acknowledge that all men are your brethren ; and you acknowledge, also, that you have found the Father whom you had lost by sin. In praying that his kingdom may come, you desire nothing else than the sincere establishment of the Gospel law in your heart ; in praying that his will may be done, you acknowledge that your own is a perverted one, and that it is needful for you that the divine life be made your own. When you ask for your daily bread, you implore the heavenly nourishment of the mind, that is to say, pure and disinterested love. Lastly, when you solicit his aid against temptation, it is because you recognise your corruption, and confess that your heart is always disposed to turn away from pure and disinterested emotions, and your intellect ever ready to yield to the seduction of vain imaginations.

Mr. Lanoue ceased speaking, but Mr. Tessier continued to look at him in profound silence, as if collecting his thoughts. Once he seemed disposed to make an effort to speak, but the words died away unuttered on his lips. He might have remained long enough in this condition, had not some one just then entered the study. The notary, deeply penetrated by what he had heard, had only time to salute the preceptor of his son, who, on this occasion, had been also his own, and retired without saying a word.

SEVENTH CONVERSATION.

THE THEORY OF SPIRITUAL FORMS.

MR. TESSIER went home extremely well satisfied with the explanations which had been given him on the subject of the other world ; nevertheless, no sooner was he alone, than, trying to form a precise idea of that other world, and not being able to succeed, his faith vanished in the twinkling of an eye. Religion was recalled to him by his feelings, but the why and the how destroyed it a moment afterwards. He had left Mr. Lanoue with the firm intention of asking no farther questions in future, but, when he had recovered a little from the impression which the last words he heard had made upon him, he found himself again bending his steps to his house. "While you uttered," said he, "that truly Christian exhortation which you gave me before I left you, I yielded

entirely to your reasons; I even felt a sort of inward remorse at the bare idea of combatting them. But I can no longer remain in this state of perplexity in which I find myself. I say to myself, with the deepest sincerity: There is another world. But when I try to draw a picture of it in my mind, I do not know where to place it, nor what idea I should attach to spiritual forms and substances, and everything vanishes into smoke.

Mr. Lanoue.—Your thought exists, and yet you do not know where you are to place it, because it is immaterial. It knows neither time nor place. The other world is of the same nature: it is bounded by neither space nor duration. With regard to forms, as they evidently exist in your thought, why should we not find them likewise in the spiritual world, which is the very region of thought?

Mr. Tessier.—I approve highly of that abstraction of time and space, which prevents us from having to allot a fixed place and a certain time to immaterial life. That life is a condition resembling thought, and, for the thinking being who is free from corporeal conditions, there exist only changes of state, instead of those impressions from without which only affect the senses. The more we reflect on this idea, the more profound we find it. When I was a child, I was told that hell was beneath my feet, and heaven above my head; but no sooner had my schoolmaster apprized me that the earth was round and the sky peopled with suns and comets, than I gave up my belief in paradise and hell, because, finding the localities allotted to them already occupied, I no longer knew where to place them. Your theory, which conceives of the immaterial world beyond the limits of time and space, as a second universe, accessible to the thought although invisible to the senses, meets all such objections; and yet, as all our ideas are borrowed from time and space, how do you think that we can imagine anything which is not contained in these limits?

Mr. Lanoue.—We can certainly conceive of no object beyond these limits, if we compare it with them, but only when we separate it from them. Thus, for example, I could never succeed in forming an idea of infinity by adding one place to another, or of eternity by adding one period of time to another; but I shall succeed, by thinking of my impressions alone, independently of the time which measures them, and of the scene which appears to circumscribe them. Suppose that we are placed together on the sea-shore. Well! our imagination leaves those rocks which surround us, and cleaves the space which our eye does not perceive. The hours pass away as we converse, without our perceiving their flight. Our impressions are mental changes of condition, which have nothing in common with notions of time and space. Were we

both suddenly to die in this condition, it is clear that our souls would be where our thoughts were occupied, and not upon the rocks with our bodies. It is also very evident, that the hours would leave no more traces of their passage than they have done to-day. If there were no movement in sensible objects, we should have no idea of duration, and time would not exist. The only thing which could then give us any perception of it, would be the succession of our ideas, and as these are not fixed, but are sometimes bounding onward in joy, and sometimes dragging themselves slowly along in sorrow, we should really have, instead of a succession of time, changes of condition. If, on the other hand, we employed the spiritual, instead of the material view, we should be freed by it from the impressions of space. Space would be penetrable for us; we should see instantaneously with the eyes of the spiritual man, what we see here below with the eye of thought.

Mr. Tessier.—I admit it is most probable. Our inward existence gives us a very good idea of the modes of perception of the spiritual life, in which we are freed from the conditions of matter. But for the apparent motion of the sun, there would be no clocks, and yet thinking and sentient beings would still exist. If these rocks, this shore, which to me represent all space, were to be suddenly swallowed up and vanish, I do not the less believe that I should still exist. My body requires space for walking and repose; my soul has need of none. What a universe this prospect opens to me! The soul knows not places and times, but only states; that is beyond a doubt. But as to form, that is a different matter. Listen, Mr. Lanoue; when I try to imagine a form devoid of matter, when I try to place this form in a place which is not a place, in a space which is not space, my head spins round. The forms of the other world seem to me to have been invented by human feebleness, which can think of nothing without representing it under a figure. An evident proof of this, is the form given by the vulgar to the Devil. It is a clumsy invention. There is no man of common sense who does not laugh at the popular portraits of the Devil, invented no doubt to terrify children. But, take care, Mr. Lanoue; the Devil must have a form, otherwise no being in the spiritual world can lay claim to possess one. Since it is certainly not to excite fear, for no man can be reformed through fear, tell me why have we this bugbear of a Devil?

Mr. Lanoue.—In our thoughts (and you will remember that our thoughts are only an inward or mental view) form is always the indication, the effigy, of a moral quality. The evil, therefore, which is in infernal spirits makes them appear to the eyes of our soul under hideous forms. Vice is an irregularity, and deformity is necessarily its expression. With the eyes of

the spirit we can see nothing which has not a form, just as with the eyes of the body we can see nothing which has not likewise a form.

Mr. Tessier.—But this is still deeper than anything you have hitherto explained to me.

Mr. Lanoue.—We say ourselves in ordinary language, when describing sin, that it is deformed: does not that word alone explain why we heap together so many hideous portraits when we wish to represent the Man of Sin, or sin personified? We say that crime is monstrous; you see, therefore, why a diabolical being for the same reason is monstrous!

Mr. Tessier.—But these are figures of speech.

Mr. Lanoue.—Whatever is true for the mind is absolutely true. The style only *expresses* what the thought *sees*. The world created by God is order; he who deranges it, or the Devil, is disorder; and it is by losing its harmonious parts that disorder becomes hideous. The Furies cannot possibly be beautiful, nor can Discord possess an attractive appearance.

Mr. Tessier.—But there are very ugly people who are good; while there are others of striking beauty, who are Furies, and whom I should tremble to see in pursuit of me.

Mr. Lanoue.—You may see, therefore, why the heart says to Nature, "Thou hast deceived me." Immaterial nature never betrays. Here below, the vases are not filled with the liquors adapted for them. A father and mother, as ugly as Satyrs, bequeath their hideous features to a soul which has reformed and become an angel. Another, on the contrary, receives from Nature, by the laws of generation and transmission which are concealed from us, a charming countenance which should be the dwelling-place of a seraph; but the want of a sufficient exertion to overcome her natural propensities transforms her into a Fury. In the intellectual world, where there is no hypocrisy, all that is reformed is beautiful, all that is not reformed is ugly. That is why we represent the angels as all that is most beautiful in outward form, as well as in the expression of the soul; while we paint the devils as everything that is most frightful. A sorceress named Circe, showed Ulysses that the man who degrades himself by his vices, comes to resemble the beasts. The beautiful in that better world where everything is in its place, is merely the covering of the good, while deformity is the mask of vice. Mythology taught that men were always metamorphosed into the animals whom in life they most resembled. In every nation, hell has been peopled with serpents, toads, and hideous animals of all kinds. Dante, who has sung the infernal regions, says that they present an unclean and disgusting spectacle to the eyes. You have there, Mr. Tessier, the theory of forms. They are the effigies—the pictures, of our thoughts. Pure thoughts are

represented by pure and beautiful forms; the impure by deformed and hideous ones.

Mr. Tessier.—Thus all hell is peopled with toads, serpents, unicorns, and monsters of every form! Why, it recalls to my mind the temptation of St. Anthony. Ah! Mr. Lanoue, if you ever succeed in making me believe that, I shall be only fit to be shut up in a mad-house.

Mr. Lanoue.—If you had a clear idea of all those monstrosities, not only would you not be mad, but you would be a great deal wiser than you are. Form being, strictly speaking, the embodiment of thought, our thoughts lend to any object which we view a form corresponding to our idea of it; but it by no means follows from this that the object itself undergoes a real change. The aspect which any country whatever presents to me, depends on the impressions I receive from it. I shall perhaps find beauty where another only discovers deformity. An individual produces on me an impression of disgust and horror; and in my thoughts I give, although invisibly, a precise character to these feelings of disgust and horror; the individual thus becomes identified in my eyes with this character, and is to me a real monster, whilst to himself he has remained the same. The forms of hell are only hideous in the pure eyes of virtue and innocence. Whatever shocks their feelings of justice takes in their eyes a deformed body. Try if your thoughts on earth can exist for a single moment without an image, without a comparison? Abstract things must assume a body before they can be comprehended. What is without form is also without attributes; we attach no fixed idea to it.

Mr. Tessier.—Thus, the devils, as far as I can comprehend your rather thorny metaphysics, do not see themselves under the form which virtue gives them! St. Anthony was surrounded by impure affections, to which his aversion naturally lent a hideous appearance. Again, I suppose the images under which poetry portrays the virtues and vices are not poetical metaphors, but real sensations.

Mr. Lanoue.—The poet is unconsciously transported to a scene of action which is not that revealed to us by our material senses. It is not the latter which form the source of inspiration, but the soaring upwards of the soul to its eternal origin. Thus, the poets tell us that enthusiasm is God in us; and hence they declare that, when inspired, it is not they who speak, but another soul which speaks through their lips. Man is purely a receptacle of the true, as he is of the false. He receives along with the sensations of the other world the images which they create; he introduces them into the inspired language of poetry; and his comparisons, when not far-fetched, but produced spontaneously, are always an exact

symbol, a correspondence, of the other world with this. All this is not the result of care and attention, as our critics of the present day maintain; for it is precisely when he most completely abandons himself to his enthusiasm that the poet exhibits most genius. We sometimes say that he exhibits talent, but the term is improper; he does not control his inspiration, he does no more than make himself its docile receptacle. If he attempts to govern his inspiration, to lead it where he pleases, it forthwith disappears. That is why poetry cannot endure mediocrity. In fact, it either results from inspiration received, and it is true, or it is the fruit of a fictitious inspiration, and it is false. But your questions here conduct us to a theory of the arts which would lead us away from our subject, and which, besides, is somewhat too profound for the present.

Mr. Tessier.—Oh! Mr. Lanoue, it is so profound that in truth I comprehend almost nothing of it. Lightning, it is true, illumines the sky, but I cannot read fluently by it.

Mr. Lanoue.—Your curiosity always drives you to dash yourself against difficulties. Return, I intreat you, to the path of the simple; it is the most agreeable and perhaps the nearest to God. Now that you are convinced of the only truth which is needful for your happiness, now that you are aware of the means of attaining it, why do you not cling to it? Your curiosity travels into regions inaccessible to your feeble love: a manifest proof that at this moment it is not love that animates you.

Mr. Tessier.—True, Mr. Lanoue; I confess my fault. The descent which conducts us to the abyss is so rapid, when we are once placed upon it, that I can no longer restrain my curiosity; I know that I go farther away from the goal, and I continue to do it, notwithstanding.

Mr. Lanoue.—You inquired, the other day, how it was that the first man, although seeing plainly the good before him, did not remain firmly attached to it. This you can now understand by your own experience. But as no reasoning can convince a man in a state of delirium, I consent to listen to you till this fever of curiosity has passed over. I trust that the explanations which I shall endeavour to give you will prevent the return of this disease of your soul, and persuade you that intellect has only been given you to point you out the road, and that afterwards you must bring your will to follow it.

Mr. Tessier.—Since we are speaking of forms, tell me what is the form of God? My mind can conceive of nothing without form, as you have just observed. When I wish to pray to God sincerely, and when I picture to myself a great cloud, I look at it attentively, and it seems to me that the cloud begins

to disappear. I follow it for some time through the air, and then my faith disappears with it. On the other hand, if I think of an aged man with venerable features, seated on the clouds, my curiosity knows no limits.

Mr. Lanoue.—Had you been capable of reasoning when in your mother's womb, could you have formed an exact idea of the wonders of this world? Well, then, how is your terrestrial intellect to attain to a perfect knowledge of the immaterial sphere and of the life from which it is derived? Your curiosity leads you into error. In so far as God is an incommunicable being, and considered in his inaccessible essence, he cannot be perceived by our thought, neither can he be limited by it to certain proportions. He is Life, and life only appears to our senses when it takes a form—when, in a word, it is specially manifested to us. Even without this form it no doubt exists, but the organ with which man is endowed cannot seize it. In so far as God is a revealed being, he manifests himself in our thoughts under our own form; not that this is an absolute, universal, and eternal form, but it is the only manifestation that can enter into our understanding, like all manifestations, by being imprinted there. Observe, besides, that, according to naturalists, the human form, the most perfect of all, is at the same time the original type of all the others on this earth. Beginning with the coarsest and most rudimental organization, it is by continually adding something to every animal that we arrive, by an ascending scale at man, whose organism is the type and model of all the others. In order to represent to ourselves God's capacity of action, we can only see him in imagination under the form in which he acts, namely, that of a man, from which model have been traced all existing organizations.

Mr. Tessier.—So that, if an animal saw God, he would see him in his own image?

Mr. Lanoue.—With an *if*, we may throw doubt on the truth of any proposition. If an animal saw by the power of thought, we cannot tell what he would see; but the plain truth is that he does not thus see. Your jest, my dear friend, will not bear examination. In the second place, if the animals saw, they would have no right to make a Deity in their own form, for it is not typical. All organizations are more or less degradations of ours. It is always in this form that man has been able to realize the principle of his being. Where can he find any other term of comparison but himself?

Mr. Tessier.—If the typical form be the human one, and if the forms of animals are degradations of the latter, I can understand why the man who removes himself from God is represented under features of deformity. In fact, he degrades himself, he loses that image of God in which he was

fashioned, he becomes less human in a word, and for that reason he takes, as his natural expression, the figure of one of the lower animals.

Mr. Lanoue.—Your idea is true in the main, but it is subject to some exceptions. The form of the lower animals is, generally speaking, a section of some one of the forms of the type, taken in a good as well as in an evil sense. A praiseworthy affection can be expressed by them as well as a vice. When you accompany me into the region of emblems, you will be convinced of the truth of what I say. A quality, abstractly considered, takes for its symbol an animal form; the latter, in fact, can only express a portion of the organization of which man himself is the whole. Besides, it is absolutely necessary that the emblems be double, for there are two things in the universe, good and evil. Each of these requires its expression. The deformity of certain animals indicates the latter; the former is represented by creatures which charm us by their agreeable forms.

Mr. Tessier.—Ah! in what a labyrinth are we wandering! Then there is nothing ugly or beautiful in Nature. This mode of viewing things is only prejudice.

Mr. Lanoue.—The understanding, you are aware, has the faculty of considering things in whatever point of view it pleases. To our uncertain and superficial reason, nothing is ugly or handsome: but with our impressions it is another thing. To say that there is neither absolute beauty nor absolute deformity in Nature, is to give the lie to all our sensations. We feel an involuntary repugnance at the sight of certain objects, and although we become afterwards familiarized with them by reasoning, the first impression was not the less for that the prompting of Nature. There is a something at the very bottom of our constitution that feels, and goes no farther. Our intellect confuses and deranges this order; but be certain that the feelings are more to be trusted than the intellect. They are the human instinct which never deceives; and, if you fully comprehended the theory which is here attempted to be explained, but which I fear is too profound for you, you would flatly contradict all our natural philosophers.

Mr. Tessier.—Something tells me, however, that I am not competent to pursue these lofty speculations. But the first cause, or God, would appear then to be only a man?

Mr. Lanoue.—I did not tell you that man was the type of the Divinity; on the contrary, I assert that humanity follows the type of the organizing form. But ever since we commenced this conversation, you have been touching on subjects where you lose yourself, like the raven despatched by Noah from the ark. I told you that there can be no faith in in-

comprehensible things : where, then, would be your faith, if all your religion consisted in similar investigations ? You only wish to discuss those matters that pertain to the understanding, while regeneration, on the contrary, addresses itself to the love of man.

Mr. Tessier.—Very good. But after this love has been formed, or even before it, we may have some curiosity to penetrate into these mysteries, and it is hard to refuse ourselves this little satisfaction. It appears to me that I should love God better, if the Deity whom I seek were to assume, in my thought, some appearance not merely imaginary.

Mr. Lanoue.—Well ; if you are tired of seeking a God of whom you cannot form any conception, and feel that your faith is expiring, if you are convinced that God must elude your comprehension unless you absolutely assign him a form, there is still a means of doing so without self-deception. The incommunicable God has communicated himself. Jesus Christ exhibited on our earth the human envelope of the *word* ; what hinders you, then, from looking on the human form as that which the Deity assumes in his most intimate relations with man ?

Mr. Tessier.—You speak like St. Paul, who teaches us that the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily in Jesus Christ : there you find the divine form at once.

Mr. Lanoue.—You may say more plainly still, with St. John : “ No man hath seen God at any time ; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.”

Mr. Tessier.—In this way we cannot be deceived, and every other search is idle, since God has willed that we should know only what Jesus Christ has manifested respecting him. But I have still a doubt remaining, Mr. Lanoue. The God whom I see so plainly in the wonders of Nature, I do not find in the political world. In the latter, the strongest are always right ; cannons, and not prayers, gain victories ; and if there be a God who directs the affairs of this outer world, it is not so much Jesus Christ as ambition.

Mr. Lanoue.—In the world there are misfortunes, and errors, no doubt ; we see there tyrants and victims ; but, without destroying the free will of man, God could never prevent these disorders. In spite of this, his Providence brings good out of evil itself. Do you not believe that, notwithstanding partial calamities, the human race is improving ? Do you not see a real and sensible progress from the most remote ages, from the fall, up to our own days ? But if progress exists, it cannot be doubted that it is produced by the divine hand, for if it had no other author than man, all would tumble into ruin. Does man destroy his habitation ?—you see

Nature forthwith cover the ruins with shrubs of every species, adorning with life the very domain of death. Lofty oaks spring up amidst the fallen towers, and the moss spreads itself in garlands over their dilapidated cornices. In like manner, when a political revolution has overturned everything in the moral world, God soon creates a new universe from this second chaos. Society only derives fresh vigour from every violent crisis. When tyrants have bent the branch of the social tree for a time, it only springs up afterwards with impetuous force. The human race has been always advancing from progress to progress, and this never-ceasing march is an irrefragable proof that Providence superintends, unknown to us, the affairs of the world. I say, unknown to us, for you plainly perceive, that, were it known to man, he would attribute his actions to God, and his liberty would be suspended. He must labour without knowing anything of his work. Believing all the while that he obeys the dictates of his passions, he goes direct to the goal assigned him by God. A king, for example, listens only to his ambition in planning a conquest which he fancies is to make his name immortal; after the conquest is made, you find that the nations have gained by it: Providence only manifests itself after the event.

Mr. Tessier.—That is precisely what Jehovah said to Moses: "Thou shalt only see me from behind."

Mr. Lanoue.—Suppose a learned man wishes to write a book, in order to establish his reputation, God takes advantage of this impure feeling, and turns it to the benefit of society. In fact, the scholar spares no labour in writing his book; and, in order that his fellow-men may honour him, he inserts in it something useful to them. In this way humanity progresses, even when he who is the agent is actuated only by vanity or avarice.

Mr. Tessier.—Oh, Mr. Lanoue, your theories have made me a different man. What! God only acts on man by making use of man himself. It is with fallen humanity, left at perfect liberty, that he conducts this humanity to an end and object which it did not foresee. How admirable! You have brought me back to reason through means of admiration. But this admiration does not prevent me from returning to the first subject of our conversation; and if you have no objection, we shall settle this point, and have done with it entirely. Immaterial forms are the representation of what is seen by the inward thought, when freed from the bodily senses. But to see God, to see spirits under a form, we must be freed from these same senses; now no one I think can be so, except after death.

Mr. Lanoue.—I beg your pardon. The prophets had visions, in which they were temporarily released from the

influence of external objects. In this state their view extended into the spiritual world, and contemplated those forms which our reason feels to be necessary, but which our senses cannot take cognizance of.

Mr. Tessier.—Ah! Mr. Lanoue, let us take care; we are now coming to the land of visions. Hitherto you have spoken to me most rationally; do not, I beseech you, change your language. The most intelligent lose themselves on such a subject. Even strong minds have become unsettled by seeing visions, hallucinations—in short, a host of absurdities which should never enter the brain of a sensible man.

Mr. Lanoue.—See what it is, Mr. Tessier, to meddle with matters in which the heart furnishes no food for the understanding. The latter is then obliged to travel alone, and acts like the imprudent youth who saw his waxen wings melt in the rays of the sun. You decide, my dear neighbour, with a single word, a question which has long occupied the most patient inquirers. The simple man who reads the Bible, cannot entertain a doubt of the truth of visions. They are too plainly announced not to be certainties. The figures seen by the prophets have no analogy with this world; they are not images calculated to heighten the style, for they often seem to us extravagant. We are therefore forced to the conclusion that they are the exact representation of the sensations of these prophets, and the impressions received by them in the other world. Since every sentiment requires an object to produce it, and every object requires a form, it follows that when a number of moral sentiments are impressed on the mind of the prophets, the same number of forms are presented to their spiritual eyes as the expression of these sentiments.

Mr. Tessier.—I begin to understand you; the spiritual eyes are those of the thought, and the prophets superadded to the sentiments with which they were filled, those images which were their natural expression. They painted sin, as you have said, under the emblem of deformity; good, under the appearance of beauty; disorder and chaos, under a mass of confused images. But, Mr. Lanoue, this is not seeing in reality, absolutely looking into the other world with eyes made expressly for that world, just as I see in this earth that I inhabit, with eyes adapted to matter; that is what must be plainly established before we can believe in a vision.

Mr. Lanoue.—Do you believe, Mr. Tessier, that man is entirely shut up in his five senses, and that he can never see or feel without their aid?

Mr. Tessier.—I believe that man is so formed on earth. As to his condition after death, I can readily believe that Providence knows how to provide new senses for new sensations. But as regards ourselves, it is our material eyes which

give us an idea of vision. Now for my part, when I shut my eyes I see nothing at all.

Mr. Lanoue.—Have you never heard of somnambulists, who see at night without light?

Mr. Tessier.—Certainly; but I presume that they open their eyes as wide as possible, and that their pupils, like those of the cat, dilate so as to receive more light than they would otherwise do, and that by this means they see a little where others see none at all. But in this case they see only what they would have seen had they been awake; none of them make any pretensions to discover the other world.

Mr. Lanoue.—Not so fast, if you please. If the eyes of the somnambulist be closed, or, supposing them to be open, if the pupil be paralysed, would you then say that they receive additional light by the dilation of this organ?

Mr. Tessier.—No; that would be a peculiar species of vision, and one differing completely from mine.

Mr. Lanoue.—Again, if you bind something over the eyes of the somnambulist, and he sees notwithstanding this obstacle; or, if you present him with a piece of writing, covering it with a sheet of white paper, and the somnambulist reads it as if nothing were interposed, what would you conclude from that?

Mr. Tessier.—I should conclude—for you always bring me, by your questions, to draw the conclusions myself—I should conclude, I say, that this man sees, in spite of the opaque matter interposed.

Mr. Lanoue.—That is to say, that he sees as those do who penetrate beyond the limits of space. Now if I should speak to you of cataleptic patients, who see, like the somnambulists, objects beyond the range of natural sight —

Mr. Tessier.—I should reply that these are accidental modes of perception; every one sees according to the modification of his organs.

Mr. Lanoue.—I do not assert that visions are constant modes of perception; they, too, are accidental modes. Many of the Highlanders of Scotland have been known to be endowed with a second sight similar to that of cataleptics and somnambulists; the chief difference is, that the Highlanders, passing the limits of time, often predict what is still to take place, while the somnambulist, leaving space behind, perceives what is beyond the range of natural sight. If this second sight be established in Scotland, it may equally well be established in Judea; and these premises once admitted, it is quite as reasonable, I think, to believe in the visions of the Jewish prophets as in those of the Scotch.

Mr. Tessier.—No doubt. We should be partial judges if we maintained the contrary. If the second sight among the Scotch were well established, we should at once have an

explanation why the Ossianic poetry, in which the bard saw, under a sensible form, the souls of his ancestors, took its rise amongst them more than others. By analogy I am led to conclude that if the souls of the departed have been seen in Scotland, the seers of Judea may have seen spirits. But the poems of Ossian belong to mythology, and the Bible is truth.

Mr. Lanoue.—Yes, but there is not a single truth of the immaterial order, in the observation of which we may not be guided by a prudent and thoughtful study of Nature. The natural phenomenon, far from discrediting the spiritual one, only proves to us its probability and likelihood. The second sight of which we have spoken was very common in ancient times, and there is every reason to believe that it formed the foundation of the belief in the power of the sybils and prophetesses to decipher the future. Woman, whose nervous system is more sensitive than that of man, played an important part in such phenomena; not that these are the simple effect of organization, but that the organization, when modified in a peculiar manner, may be thereby rendered more capable of receiving immaterial impressions.

Mr. Tessier.—That is what you told me when speaking of fasts and abstinence; and I fully understand that a brain heated by all sorts of corporeal means may be driven to delirium: it is thus, in fact, that all dreams are accounted for.

Mr. Lanoue.—The brain when heated, as you call it, is capable of attaining to perceptions beyond the bounds of time and space; that is certain. At present, in order to know whether we are to refer these visions to delirium or reason, we must examine the visions themselves, independently of the means of acquiring the perception of them.

Mr. Tessier.—That is certainly requisite. But I do not see that it follows, because we undergo certain changes of state which extend our vision beyond the conditions of ordinary existence, that we can arrive at the perception of spiritual forms. There is a barrier there: people, although gifted with this second sight, have never perceived any objects and forms but those belonging to our own world.

Mr. Lanoue.—Do we require, in order to see those of the other world, any vision superior to that which can extend beyond time and space?

Mr. Tessier.—No, certainly.

Mr. Lanoue.—Well, then, you may conclude that those who saw natural forms were in the natural condition as to the mind; and that those who saw spiritual forms were in the spiritual one as to the mind. The vision of each depended solely on the elevation of his sentiments. Every one in the moral world sees according to the capacity of his mind; and in the immaterial world it is so likewise. You saw in our

last conversation, that every man forms a heaven for himself conformable to his thoughts. Is it not natural to conclude from this that, once arrived in the spiritual world, every one forms his own horizon; that each sees what his soul is capable of perceiving, the sensual man material objects, the spiritual man the world of causes. The difference between the prophet and the somnambulist is merely in the elevation of the soul. If both be transported into a sphere inaccessible to the senses, the one carries with him there his terrestrial impressions, the other his celestial sentiments. The one sees the earth, but he does so as a man to whom the flight of thought annihilates distance; the other sees heaven, with its forms.

Mr. Tessier.—Thus the forms seen in thought are seen with the eyes of the spirit; the spirit, then, is really endowed with vision! If your explanation, Mr. Lanoue, were studied carefully by those competent to judge of it, they would discover in it the foundations of an exact science; they would be able by means of it to demonstrate the immateriality of the soul in a manner we may almost call palpable. In fact, if the soul can enter the other world while still in this life, there is of course no reason to doubt that it does so after death. Though as good a Christian as my neighbours, would you believe that, before making your acquaintance, I had sometimes doubts about the immortality of my soul, and I was inclined to believe that all was over with me at the hour of death.

Mr. Lanoue.—A very simple reflection should have preserved you from such an error. What, in fact, are the organs of the body, if not instruments for executing faithfully what the affection wishes and what the understanding thinks? Your legs have been given you to go whithersoever you will; your hands to seize what you desire; your eyes to see; and your ears to hear. These organs are the servants of the thought. You see clearly that the thought cannot be the result of them: that would be putting the effect before the cause. The eye itself cannot see if the soul be not behind the optic nerve to seize the object; your ear would not hear what I tell you, if your soul were not attentive.

Mr. Tessier.—Yes; but the physicians of the present day are said to be so learned that they have perhaps discovered something in the human body which gives a sort of foundation to materialism.

Mr. Lanoue.—They have only discovered there organs adapted to the functions of a being who feels, and who consequently should be obeyed.

Mr. Tessier.—At that rate, you would adopt the definition of M. de Bonald, that man is an intellect served by organs. I have heard physicians criticise this idea.

Mr. Lanoue.—The idea is true as far as it goes; but it is insufficient. We have already seen that life is a series of phenomena independent of the will. Thus, man has organs which obey his intellect and serve it; but there are others which form the channels by which his life is preserved and modified, without his being conscious of it. In all that does not obey our will, physicians have seen the effects of life; but life is no more in their eyes than in yours a material thing. Will you be inclined to say that man has no soul, after having examined the organs of the senses distributed over his face? On the contrary, you will exclaim: What an admirable arrangement! In the interior of the human body, likewise, anatomists have only found the most perfect arrangement, and materialism is not produced by admiration. So far from this, a famous physician of antiquity, called Galen, composed a beautiful hymn in honour of the Deity, on contemplating a dead body which he was dissecting. The error of vulgar physicians is to take the manifestations of life for life itself. Is it not clear that the corporeal organ no more produces thought and sensation, than the germ creates the vegetative life which animates it? Everything descends from above. Matter does not produce, it is merely a sponge which drinks in the water brought in contact with it; but the water exists independently of the sponge. This is so clear, that there is not a single man who, by nature, and before he has been spoiled by our systems, does not believe in his soul. When a man says: *I believe, I will*, he does not speak of his body; when he says: *My hand and my arm*, he indicates a hand and an arm which belong to him, and not to his body. Lastly, when he says: *My body*, he distinguishes this body as the instrument of another being, who is its master and proprietor.

Mr. Tessier.—Well, I have fifty times resolved all those doubts, and fifty times have I become just as perplexed as before. It has even happened sometimes that, when awaking from pious meditation, I have seen the carcass of a dog in the street, at the sight I have become almost a materialist. Has not this animal, I said, bones, muscles, and flesh, nourished by blood similar to my own?—has he not a brain and nervous system, lungs for respiration, and a stomach for digestion, and yet his life has ended when his heart ceased to beat? That is also my own destiny. When this animal began life, he was sportive and frolicksome; in my own early years, I had little more appearance of soul than he. As he advanced in years, this dog exhibited proofs of fidelity and intelligence: a gesture was sufficient to convey to him his master's wishes; his only want was the faculty of speech. Oh! how deeply I have studied this problem of the souls of animals! What do I possess more than the animals, to survive me?

Is it my intellect? Their instinct is more sure. Is it my virtue? I often sink below them by intemperance. Pardon me, Mr. Lanoue, but I must make a sincere confession; and, although I have been so well instructed by you, I am not sure that these tormenting ideas will not return.

Mr. Lanoue.—I did not expect to meet an objection suggested by the sight of a dead dog. However, as you have made it, I must reply. When you compared your intellect to the instinct of the brute, you remarked that the latter was more unerring. You should have concluded from this, that the instinct of the animal was derived from a different source. We are left to the government of our reason, in order that it may raise itself to God. It sometimes doubts and vacillates, but that is very natural. The animal is endowed with a sure and prompt instinct which never deceives him, because, having no means of raising himself to the Deity, God himself has enlightened him. In the second place, you observe that you are intemperate, and that the animal never outsteps its wants. From this you should conclude, that, if you can abuse anything, it is because it belongs to you, because you are endowed with faculties the employment of which is entrusted to you; but, as there is no employment for which we are not to render an account, you ought to have said: This animal which lies before me has already given an account of all his faculties, since his actions have been guided by God himself, but I shall have to do this afterwards.

Mr. Tessier.—But, Mr. Lanoue, according to your theory there is no such account rendered; we merely organize ourselves for heaven or hell.

Mr. Lanoue.—My expression was metaphorical, but perfectly just. Let us briefly go over the subject again, if you please. I say that if man has the faculty of organizing himself, and the animal has not, it is because the life of the first has an object, while that of the second is accomplished on earth. Similarity of organs makes no change in this. Of what importance is the apparatus which is given to the intellect? In order to act in a material world, a material apparatus is necessary; but because there are flesh and blood in the human body, do you regard your soul as mortal? What substance could be better calculated for the discharge of the physical functions? Would you wish that, on account of his dignity, man had been endowed with a body of diamond? Would that have better insured his immortality?

Mr. Tessier.—Nothing, I admit, can be better chosen than bones, flesh, and blood. But the memory of the animal, his moral faculties, if I may use the expression, what of them?

Mr. Lanoue.—He derives these from God, like ourselves. There are two faculties in God: the divine Love, which is the

universal being, the life-giving principle of all that exists in Nature; and the divine Wisdom, which is the regulator of this love. Love and Wisdom constitute God in his essence. By the one he creates, by the other he judges and contemplates his work. The animals are receptacles of God's influence like ourselves, but they only receive this creating principle, which I call love, and which produces in them those simple actions which have self-preservation and propagation for their object. Man receives, with the divine love, the divine wisdom also: it is by it that he is enlightened, that he is enabled to rise to its source. There is nothing in all the faculties of the animal which reaches farther than material wants; for man there is, beyond this life, another existence completely moral. He alone admires his author. The ox, in his rich pastures, never raises his grateful eyes towards heaven. The poets say that the birds sing the praises of God; it is not true: it is their own loves that they sing. But I drop this subject, which would lead us too far, and which assuredly, notwithstanding all your intellect, you are not capable of perfectly comprehending. Let us merely lay down that the animal is a receptacle only in one degree, and that man is so in two. Thus there is something divine in everything, but it is only in man that this divine influence finds a life which reacts on it by turning back towards it. God has created the world by his love; but the object of love is not to love itself alone, but to diffuse itself around, in order that it may meet with a return. Now no animal in the universe returns to God the love that it has received from him; man alone has this privilege. It is, therefore, through him that the creation is to return to its author.

Mr. Tessier.—We have conversed on this subject before, but it is only now that I comprehend it. What a profound theory! This is the mysterious link which unites God, man, and the universe. God has created the world in order to unite himself to it, and it is only by man that this admirable project can be accomplished. I now comprehend the destination of man on earth. He is the sole witness of the wonders of the Author of nature, and it is clear that it was not to confound the Creator with the creation that God made him its witness. Oh! Mr. Lanoue, how far have we been carried by your remarks on the dead dog! If it be necessary that love should produce a reaction by its own warmth shed over the universe, man must be immortal, for he alone can say to God: Here am I who have received and understood thy influence, and who lay it down again at thy feet. If the universe returns to its author, it must be through man himself; if it does not return, there is no end or object for the creation. The divine love would in that case be like a sky-rocket which loses itself in the air, a feeling that has no seat, a palpable, nay a

revolting absurdity. If I am not immortal, God is not so; love is empty air; wisdom a breath; the world a mockery. Ah! Mr. Lanoue, let the materialists attack me now!

Mr. Lanoue.—We are generally inclined to draw our conclusions from what we touch, and we should therefore endeavour to keep this always before us, viz. that we see nothing, and can feel nothing without the soul, which descends into the arms, which stretches out the hand, which dwells in the eyes, which listens in the ears, and which makes our tongue produce articulate sounds.

Mr. Tessier.—But where has this soul its seat?

Mr. Lanoue.—Some have placed it in the brain proper, others in the cerebellum, and others again in the pineal gland. There are persons, on the other hand, who maintain that it dwells in the breast. The soul finds in the brain the origin of the nerves, by the aid of which it moves all the machine; that is why the soul is said by man to be where he, as it were, feels its presence. The brain is divided into two parts. The frontal part, which is the brain properly so-called, has a peculiar relation to the intellectual functions; the other, which is behind, and which is called the cerebellum, is more especially connected with the affections. The latter appears to communicate more directly with that part of man which has self-love and the propagation of the species for its province.

Mr. Tessier.—But is the soul there then?

Mr. Lanoue.—No; the brain is simply that portion of the corporeal body through which the soul governs and directs that body. The spider's web is not the spider; you might just as well say that the life is in the lungs, because when a man gives his last sigh we say that he expires. You might as well imagine that it is in the heart, because when the heart ceases to beat everything is finished on earth.

Mr. Tessier.—But, in fact, the blood flows from the heart, and when the blood ceases to circulate the soul disappears. Are we not told also that the soul is a breath? Did not God breathe a soul into Adam by his nostrils, and from the nostrils it descended of course into the lungs?

Mr. Lanoue.—The systems of circulation and respiration are intimately connected with the action of the great machine. The lungs and heart obey the impulse of the mind so exactly, only because they are united to it by a sympathetic relation. There is an exact correspondence between them, and you must feel that between the spiritual and the natural no other relation than a correspondence can exist. The spiritual is not the natural more highly purified, but is a force which absolutely escapes our senses, and is only revealed by the organs which it specially affects. However, a relation necessarily exists between them. They are two lives which proceed with

a simultaneous movement. That is why we commonly say that the heart is the seat of love; that is why we attribute to the organs of respiration the privilege of being the receptacle of intellect. The bosom swells with admiration, or sinks in melancholy. The heart beats with joy, trembles with delight, and is wrung with anguish. All this proves to you that the machine is marvellously adapted to the requirements of the soul, but that the latter alone has life.

Mr. Tessier.—The soul then is in the body as God is in the universe; that is to say, everywhere and nowhere. Everywhere for the enlightened intellect; nowhere for the material view.

Mr. Lanoue.—This wish to find the palpable even in the immaterial, has assigned a seat to that which, as you say, is everywhere in the human body. All the organs serve the soul, each one according to its capacity. Tertullian says that the soul, at death, carries away the man with it. It is diffused throughout the whole man; it gives him life, movement, and will. It is an internal man of a different substance from the external; you may therefore give it the human form. The only difference lies in its superior nature. The soul is the man-spirit. When a man feels pain in a member which has been amputated, it is because the member of the man-spirit has not been mutilated.

Mr. Tessier.—But how can we imagine a form for that which we cannot feel? That is very difficult. You see that we always return to our forms.

Mr. Lanoue.—You are the dupe of your senses, Mr. Tessier. Form is clear or confused, according to the quality of the understanding; and, in the thought of man, it always precedes the matter with which it is enveloped. The sculptor sees the immaterial form of the statue which he is about to execute. In his thought, therefore, the form first exists; the matter comes afterwards, and moulds itself conformably to the form. The latter is, as it were, the plan which precedes the edifice and contains it. A house is merely a form, which an architect has rendered fixed and stable by means of stone, lime, and wood. The idea of matter is, therefore, posterior to that of the mould in which it is cast. God, no doubt, saw the world in thought before he put his thought into execution. That which emanates from him, viz. the immaterial life, is a *formative* life, if I may be permitted the expression. It is plastic; it creates, it moulds matter conformably to the figure which it receives from God.

Mr. Tessier.—The sceptics will gain nothing by attacking you; you will defeat them by turning their brains, for they will never attempt to follow you into your metaphysics. You have enabled me to comprehend you; but you must educate

most people, to some extent, before you can bring them so far. Moreover, St. Paul confirms your assertion when he says that man is sown a natural body and is raised a spiritual one. There can be no other resurrection. It was perhaps from falsely regarding the soul as a vapour, that the idea of a final judgment in flesh and blood was invented, in order that man might resume that form which he had in thought, and without which he is nothing. The soul, we may conclude, then, has the human form, but it is difficult to impress this on the mind; for what is the substance of that which is not matter?

Mr. Lanoue.—Can you tell me what matter is, either? The word substance is not synonymous with the word matter. Substance is something independent of material atoms, which take such or such a mould, or such or such a manifestation, according to external accidents. We may, in thought, deprive the being of all these atoms, which only pass within him, and nevertheless this being will still exist. He will not certainly be manifest to the corporeal senses, but only to those of the spirit; in a word, he will be a spiritual body, as St. Paul says, whom you have very appropriately quoted on this occasion. The same Apostle warns you also of the uselessness of your investigations into the nature of spiritual substances. "There is one flesh," he says, "of beasts, another of birds, another of fishes; and there are also bodies celestial and bodies terrestrial." It is clear that whatever escapes the scrutiny of our five senses, cannot possibly be judged of by them. In the state of extasis or spiritual *clairvoyance*, as in that of ordinary sleep, substances are presented to our eyes which are not matter. To determine the nature of these, we should require a special organ for the purpose, which we do not possess.

Mr. Tessier.—I was going to ask you at first what is the form of heaven, but I said to myself, "How can one know the form of that which has neither matter nor space?" Now that you lead me to think of form, however, as distinct from, and in some degree anterior to, matter, I may inquire, I think, if heaven be round like the earth, or square like a table; if it has compartments or divisions?

Mr. Lanoue.—Heaven not being a place, but a condition of life, can only offer to the thought the idea of universal organization in its original conception. Life escapes from a centre and spreads itself over the circumference, conformably to the manner in which we see all life moulded when it takes a material body. It is life which gives a form to matter. But life cannot produce itself; it depends for its existence on a previous life, which is heaven. When you see an artery beat, you conclude that it receives its movement from a special organ in the human body. All life in heaven, or rather all love, beats in unison, in the same way, with universal love

which is, as it were, the special organ of the great spiritual body.

Mr. Tessier.—You transport me with this love, which is the regulator of all kinds of love. Love being life, love itself is life itself. Thus, when St. Paul says that we are all members of Jesus Christ, he makes use of no rhetorical figure, as is generally believed. He only reveals the form of heaven. I have read a work of the Socialists, in which they explain this passage of St. Paul to suit their doctrine. They think it denotes an incarnation of the truth among men on earth. Everything which you assert has its source in heaven, they think takes its origin in our social position. This point of view is a narrow one; I like your theory much better.

Mr. Lanoue.—St. Paul was often in a state of extasis or spiritual *clairvoyance*; witness the event which produced his conversion. He saw, with the eyes of the spirit, what he expressed in such clear and forcible words. Most of our Christian divines look on that as a mere figure of speech, for want of knowing that every perception of the spiritual world absolutely requires a figure.

Mr. Tessier.—This theory of forms is admirable! Nevertheless, if I am to believe all that you say, if we be really members of God, we must conclude that men are located in the different organs of the original type. One body of men would occupy the eye, another the mouth, and a third the nose.

Mr. Lanoue.—A profound thought of Mallebranche's will aid us to solve this question. "God," says this great philosopher, "is the abode of spirits, just as space is the abode of bodies." It follows, then, that if the spirits have their abode in him, the place which each occupies should correspond to the manner in which he receives the divine life. God is life, and every vital function belonging to this life should be attached to a special organ, since there is no life without organs, the entire sum of a body being only formed of organic parts. Every being, therefore, forms a part of the mystical body of God in heaven, and every one belongs to a particular place in that body.

Mr. Tessier.—But I always took that for a fable. The Hindoos say the same thing of their god Bramah, of whom the Bramins occupy the head and the Parias the feet.

Mr. Lanoue.—It is a truth which was known to extatics from the earliest times, and it was the revelations of these extatics which constituted the first religious books of all nations. Their successors, who did not enjoy the same mode of perception, took them afterwards for mere fables. But I shall endeavour to place this difficult subject before you in its true light. Heaven can receive life only from God. Consider God as an immaterial organization, and then ask yourself if this organization be the type of all living forms.

If you are convinced that it is, you have at once, as the type of life in the immaterial world, that organization which is the model of it here below. But when we consider the different parts of this great Type, we must not think of them as earthly organs, but as spiritual qualities corresponding to these organs. The nose, for example, is not, in Him, the organ destined for the secretion of a certain fluid, but denotes the faculty of perceiving. Qualities of mind belong to every organ, as to every protuberance of the skull. When you say, with Dr. Gall, that a man has the organ of acquisitiveness very large, you really say that he is a miser or a robber. It is the same thing with heaven. Man is classified there according to the organ which determines his affection; it is a very precise manner of giving the value of his being, as well as the nature of his life and functions.

Mr. Tessier.—Man, in fact, is designated on earth by the instrument of which he makes the most frequent use, as the sailor is characterized by an anchor, and the poet by a lyre.

Mr. Lanoue.—In fact, since in heaven, or the celestial state, there are only perceptions and affections, each of which has its organ, and as every body has its form, it is indispensable to distinguish them by these organs, and to unite in thought the same organs in one single system of life. It is thus that heaven, regarded in detail as well as in its universality, may, in the eyes of the spirit, take the form of all the organs to which the idea of the moral faculties is attached. If everything takes a form in the future world, if every mental quality is represented by a certain object, it is certain that the faculties composing man in his moral nature cannot take squares or cubes as their emblems, but organs which are the depositories of life. It is more reasonable, I presume, when speaking of an obedient or attentive man, to say, "this man is all ears," than to seek a symbol for the same quality among inanimate objects. Minerva is represented in the fable as issuing from the brain of Jupiter. Is not that a more natural type of wisdom than any other symbol? Is not the forehead of the king of the gods the very seat of wisdom? But it is only the far-seeing eye of genius which can thus grasp the form of spiritual organization as a whole. The uneducated see nothing of this whole, nor of the place which they themselves occupy in it. Before they can see that such is the case, it must be demonstrated to them; as was done by the orator who convinced the populace of Rome that the stomach nourished all the members of the social body. The senate was the stomach, though the people did not know it.

Mr. Tessier.—If, instead of looking at the social body in this point of view, I endeavoured to consider the spiritual world under the human form, I think the stomach, into which

all the food descends in a mass, there to be separated and dispersed through the frame, might serve very well as an emblem of the preparatory world into which all men, both good and wicked, enter after death, there to remain until a separation is effected. This comparison may be, perhaps, at the same time a figure of speech and a spiritual perception.

Mr. Lanoue.—The stomach, in fact, nourishes the body, as the preparatory world furnishes sustenance to heaven.

Mr. Tessier.—Thus God, heaven, and man, have all a common type—all one common form.

Mr. Lanoue.—All, in fact, spring from the same source. The ancients showed that they had almost grasped this great truth when they designated man the *microcosm*, or little world, because, as he was created according to the universal form, he included all its elements. The universe, being the material basis on which life rests, has likewise its form. In a word, if man is the little universe, the universe is necessarily the Great Man.

Mr. Tessier.—I once read somewhere that the world was a huge animal; and from not knowing the truth concealed under this expression, I endeavoured to find some resemblance between the conformation of the earth and that of an animal. The rivers, I fancied, were the veins of this great body; the rocks were the bones. At present I can conceive of the universe as modelled after the great organism. All that has life in the universe is in imitation of it—a more or less perfect type of life. In man this type is completely reflected; it is clear, therefore, that man is the little universe.

Mr. Lanoue.—It is for this reason that the dogma of the Universe-God, which was generally received among the ancients, is so true if we look on the entire universe as the reflection of the organism which animates it; but it is pure atheism, and at the same time a palpable absurdity, to pretend that organization proceeds from matter.

Mr. Tessier.—You always blame me for my curiosity, as if you were led by my questions only into useless speculations. Observe, however, the important consequences to which we are led by your theory of forms! In all religions God is considered as a moral quality. It was in vain that you formerly told me that God is Goodness personified. Goodness is a metaphysical quality, therefore I concluded that God is only an abstraction of the mind. At present I see that God is life, substance, and form. Judge, then, if he can escape me! He is Life in its principle, the Substance of all that exists, the Creative Form of all that is organized. He is received by beings more or less perfectly, according as they are placed at different degrees from him. To one, he is visible in all his splendour, like the sun at mid-day; to another, he appears

veiled in clouds. But all these variations belong to the receptacle. *Quiquid recipitur*, as we used to say at college—*recipitur ad modum recipientis* (all that is received is received according to the quality of the recipient). Observe, then, the conclusion to be drawn from all this! The creation is an emanation from the substance and the very life of God. In this way it manifestly falls under the domain of the understanding. The vulgar opinion, which maintains that God made everything out of nothing, is devoid of common sense.

Mr. Lanoue.—In fact, there is an incontestable axiom of ancient philosophy, which says, *Nihil de nihilo* (nothing can arise from nothing). I reply to your quotation by another; but I admire the perspicuity of your mind, Mr. Tessier.

Mr. Tessier.—The mind is neither learning nor memory; it is the understanding applied to subjects. According to this definition, which admits of no exception, the more elevated a subject is, the more the mind that occupies itself with it becomes developed. I believe, also, that the means of attaining to lofty ideas is to give the mind free scope on lofty subjects.

Mr. Lanoue.—Thus, you have now the theory of forms in its first principle. The great Whole is created on the model of the human form; not the material Whole, with its seas and continents, but the living and organized Whole. Matter, in fact, does not constitute the world, but passes indifferently from mould to mould, without retaining the form of any. It is life alone that has form. Pan, who among the ancients was the emblem of the great Whole, had the human face and the feet of the lower animals: a proof that the authors of the mythology believed the primitive organization to comprehend in one single type all the degrees of life.

Mr. Tessier.—Centuries must elapse, Mr. Lanoue, before the lower classes in these countries are capable of understanding your theory of forms; I have never in my life met with anything so deep. I only understood so much of it as will prevent me in future from conceiving of heaven under the form of a planet or a comet.

Mr. Lanoue.—And as much, I hope, as will lead you to consider it as a principle of life which descends into every organization, and which manifests itself more sensibly in one apparatus or organ than another to those who make especial use of the faculties which this apparatus or organ denotes. One man has more love, consequently more heart; the other has more intellect, and lives more by or in the head.

Mr. Tessier.—You complete the phrase better than I could have done. I will only add to your definition a single word; namely, that a theory which teaches that there are no faculties without organs, dissipates the illusions of those spiritualists

who lose themselves in empty space, whilst it takes from the materialist all excuse for saying that the organ itself is thought. How many false deductions have been drawn from the system of Dr. Gall! Is not the material organ necessary for the material manifestation of thought? But let us come, if you please, to the lessons which morality and good sense should draw from all this. Man, after death, is a being of spiritual essence. He has a form; since this form, which is anterior to the notions acquired by the senses, is a primitive perception and not a subsequent application of material facts. What is essential for me is, that I can no longer think of man as pure and passive matter; his manifest relation to God in this world proves to me the relation which he continues to hold towards him in the other. He is the monarch of the universe, and not a simple actor in it; and yet philosophers have often ridiculed this royalty, which they call imaginary.

Mr. Lanoue.—It is expressly mentioned in Genesis, but sceptics will not believe it. However, common sense alone should be sufficient to demonstrate the supremacy of man over the rest of the creation. Let him look around him, and endeavour to find a single being that is his equal!

Mr. Tessier.—There is not one within all the range of my vision, and I believe that I might change my horizon a thousand times without seeing anything throughout the world but the Material submitted to the yoke of the Intellectual. I see domestic animals becoming the slaves of man, and wild beasts flying at his approach.

Mr. Lanoue.—Observe, besides, that man is the only being in creation that makes use of everything that exists; that no being, except God, has the privilege of making use of him; and that God himself, even while regarding him as a co-operator in his work, leaves him his entire liberty. What animal on earth but man can boast of being endowed with free will?

Mr. Tessier.—In this point of view, your doctrine is, in fact, magnificent. We can imagine nothing more perfect than a being free in his very essence. The liberty of man is the title of his glory and excellence. But tell me, then, why the monarch of Nature is obliged to assume the attitude of a slave when he combats the lion or the tiger. Tell me why the ocean swallows up his vessel without pity, and casts his dishonoured corpse on the strand. He builds himself a cabin at the foot of a mountain, and the wind detaches an avalanche that overwhelms his dwelling, and destroys himself and his family. Why have we pestilence, famine, earthquakes, volcanoes, waterspouts, hurricanes? In a word, why have we physical evil? The question of moral evil is easily accounted for by the free will of man. God cannot prevent crime and openly

protect innocence without suspending free will; but man would not be less free were there neither ferocious animals nor physical revolutions.

Mr. Lanoue.—External nature is the world of effects. The effects appear here below; the causes of these effects are above. The universe is a manifestation of the invisible. The good has its emblem, or rather its expression, on earth. It is absolutely necessary that the evil should have its expression here too; for the other world, which contains at once good and evil, is united to ours by indissoluble relations. A blow aimed at the one is, as it were, felt by the other. It is inevitable that it should be so; the chain would otherwise be broken. The spiritual world, if alone, would be a world of causes without manifestation; the universe which we inhabit, if disconnected from the spiritual, would be a mass of effects without a cause. The reason of the existence of physical evil upon our earth leads to the question, why is there evil in the immaterial world? Wherefore is the immaterial sphere the principle of all that has life here below? You feel that we should be very daring philosophers were we to call God to account for the law which unites the two worlds.

Mr. Tessier.—Thus it is Hell that produces physical evil. The common people, in fact, attribute to the Devil everything that is evil. But then, it is very hard to be forced to adopt the philosophy of the common people.

Mr. Lanoue.—In certain cases the common people are the depositories of the ancient traditions, which are the foundation of all our truths. *Vox populi vox Dei*, says the proverb. If we did not attach such childish and ridiculous ideas to the words Devil and Hell, the question would be much clearer. It would be reduced to this: agreeable objects are the manifestation of a sentiment equally agreeable, what is good in itself and in its existence is likewise good in its essence; and, *vice versa*, hurtful things are really the expression, the image, and the manifestation, of the moral causes which we call evil. No one will contradict this assertion. That which has an existence evidently contrary to law and harmony, springs from the source of disorder and confusion. The good produces what is analogous to itself, while the evil can only manifest what is identical with its own nature.

Mr. Tessier.—Your explanation is rigorously exact. An evil manifestation must follow from hurtful principles; that is incontestable. But then there are natural phenomena, which without being essentially evil in their nature, sometimes do injury to man. The tempest is not from Hell; for I presume that the action of the winds is necessary to the great machine.

Mr. Lanoue.—Nature has her laws, which must have their constant execution. When we place ourselves in contradiction

to those laws, it is very clear that they will not be superseded out of respect for us. We suffer shipwreck in a tempest, but that is not to be attributed to the Devil. There are things which are injurious to us, simply because our ignorance does not permit us to see that they are in their place in the Great Whole. Farther, our selfish interest, which falsifies everything, leads us to call a thing injurious which is only hurtful for the moment, while it may turn to our advantage an instant afterwards. The potter asserts that the rain which falls on his vases, is sent by the Devil; while his neighbour, the gardener, regards it as a benediction from on high.

Mr. Tessier.—To see justly in all cases, we must forget ourselves and our personal interest. It is not with reference to our pots or our lettuces that we must consider the question of physical evil. With such an impartial mode of judging, there would be neither absolute good nor evil; both would only be relative. The horizon extends, Mr. Lanoue. What is evil in itself, in its material existence, is evidently evil in its spiritual origin. What we, weak and imperfect men, call evil, is often good which escapes us. We do not know the origin of laws; we comprehend neither their execution nor their whole. The thorn which pierces my heel is not an evil in itself, it is useful in its place; it is I who have produced the evil by thrusting it into my foot. What a clear vision do we not require to know what is evil! Nature has constant laws, and man can in nowise modify them. In this case, I presume you do not believe, like M. de Maistre, that prayer has influence on those laws, that God will send us rain or sunshine because we humbly supplicate for them.

Mr. Lanoue.—To pray to God on occasion of a visitation, is to entreat him to bring us into a condition of acquiring self-denial, and of gaining strength to endure what we suffer. That is how prayer may withdraw us from evil influence. I do not know that it has any other action. Besides, I have never seen in the Gospel any formula of prayer for obtaining fine weather or rain, but I have met with that prayer which teaches us to ask of God: "That his will be done." That ought to be our only occupation. Ah! how sweet it is to repose on the bosom of Providence, whilst awaiting those things over which we have no control! It is, as Montaigne says, a sweet pillow for a mind at peace. When the lightning flashes, we should not be disturbed, but only use those means which Providence has made known to us through our reason to ward it off. I believe that Franklin showed a loftier idea of the Deity by using his lightning-conductor, than the sacristan of the parish in ringing the bells, which attract the electric fluid to the church.

Mr. Tessier.—One runs no risk of becoming superstitious

with you, Mr. Lanoue; I thank you, with all my heart and soul, for the explanations you have so kindly given me upon the most difficult subject I have ever encountered in my life. I hope you will excuse the numerous and impertinent questions which I have taken the liberty of addressing to you. Thanks to you, I have no more doubts. I know where I am; I know how, and why I am here; I know what I ought to do; you have taught me as clearly as possible what I shall one day become. Any additional questions which may now present themselves to my mind would be only the abuse of the imagination, and I ought not therefore to mention them.

Mr. Lanoue.—I hope you are not mistaken, Mr. Tessier. May you cling to what is really useful! It is not by extending our horizon that we are more happy, it is by circumscribing it. The farther the vision extends, the more rapidly does the desire of traversing space increase with it. It is not by yielding to our desires that we obtain peace of mind, it is by resisting them. This theory of forms which you grasp will offer you new mysteries continually arising; while regeneration, which is the whole of religion, has no more mystery for you. How happy should I be, my dear neighbour, to see you return only to join with me in those prayers which are at once the nourishment of the heart and the intellect. Jesus has told us that when even two or three are met together in his name, he will be in the midst of them. The lonely man is too often inactive; he may be a vain man or an egotist, conversing with a venal conscience that flatters him. Come, Mr. Tessier, come sometimes to join your prayers to mine; let us endeavour to encourage each other in the path of life by mutual confidence. We may be penetrated by truth in the retirement of our closet, but we derive new strength from the convictions of others. When we know that God listens to our prayers, when they find an echo in the heart of our neighbour, have we not a motive strong enough for seeking his society? Ah! such fellowship is more profitable than solitary study and sluggish contemplation!

Mr. Tessier.—You overwhelm me at once with shame and repentance, Mr. Lanoue. Why can I not commence to-day this Christian life, which you have painted to me in such delightful colours? But the water of the lake. Mr. Lanoue, is still muddy; it is not long since it was agitated by the wind: it must be allowed to repose and recover its clearness, before it can reflect the image of God.

With these words the notary disappeared.

EIGHTH CONVERSATION.

JESUS CHRIST THE ONLY GOD.—THE SECOND COMING.

THE notary, carried away by his curiosity, had gone much farther in his questions than he had had any intention of doing. He did not know how he was again to address Mr. Lanoue, from whom, notwithstanding, he had still many things to learn. He feared to be blamed for his fatiguing mental excursions into the spiritual world, whilst, although knowing the true path which he was to keep in it, he refused to set out upon the road, and had always some pretext for deferring his new life. At last, he decided to make his appearance at the usual hour, and entering forthwith upon the subject, "You must positively," said he, "Mr. Lanoue, have the kindness to go back with me to some enigmas which I have still to decipher. Although convinced of the necessity of redemption, it is still requisite, as it appears to me, that you should strengthen my faith in the person of the Redeemer. There is no Christianity without Christ: how then can you expect me to practise religion, if I have not a complete acquaintance with its author?"

Mr. Lanoue.—Your request is most reasonable. Go on, then; I am all attention.

Mr. Tessier.—I confess to you that the Trinity has always puzzled me. Three different actors on the stage of our world, which bears the impress of only a single author—three wills, when everything proves to me that there can be only one—and lastly, one of the Divine persons sacrificing himself to appease the anger of the other—all this confuses my imagination, notwithstanding the light which you have already thrown upon the darkness of my mind.

Mr. Lanoue.—No doubt there is only one author of the great work of Nature. But there are epochs when we have seen this author act in a progressive manner. When he first opened the celestial life to man by implanting in his heart disinterested Love, or in other words by creating him, he was a Father. When man, having fallen, had need of aid to re-establish himself in his original condition, God communicated to him his Wisdom; and this wisdom, considered as proceeding from the divine essence, and as sent by it, was named the Son. Lastly, wisdom having enlightened man, it was necessary that the latter should return to the way which he had forsaken, and in this task he could do nothing unless, in all the strictness of the term, by the operation of the Holy Spirit.

Mr. Tessier.—Thus the three Gods are only one, as the catechism tells us. Jehovah, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit express, under three different names, three operations

of the Divine Being with respect to man. They are three acts of the same being, if I am not mistaken. But why have they been called persons?

Mr. Lanoue.—Shortly after the establishment and public adoption of the Christian religion, some of the faithful, being unable to form any idea of Jesus Christ as God, held that he was the virtue or the wisdom of God, but they denied his eternity. These men followed the opinions of Arius. It is, evident, nevertheless, that if Jesus were the Divine wisdom in human form, he must be co-eternal with the same Being from whom he had emanated. To combat the Arians, a Council was assembled at Nice, where a creed was drawn up expressing the opinion of the church on the Trinity. The early Christians gave to the human nature assumed by Jesus Christ, the Greek name of *hypostasis*, which signifies a substance which exists upon, or by the influence of another. The fathers of the Council translated this word by that of *persona*, which in the Latin of that period had the same signification which is attached to the word "personage," in the present day. You can understand how the same being may perform three successive actions, may represent successively three separate parts or persons, without ceasing to be one. That is the sense in which it is true to say that there are three persons in God, although there is but one single God.

Mr. Tessier.—Your learned explanation, Mr. Lanoue, is so clear and palpable, that if the sceptics of our day heard it, they would no longer be disposed to laugh. You know our theologians say that God the Father is seated on a throne, that his Son is seated at his right hand, and that the Holy Spirit, under the form of a dove, goes from the one to the other. How can we be Christians with such images before our eyes? No matter how I should strive, I could never get all that into my brain. But, nevertheless, I have still one doubt left. I am always afraid that your great learning may perhaps lead you to find in things more than they really contain. I distrust those persons a little who always maintain that they are right; and yet what you explain to me is so clear, that I cannot imagine it could have been so arranged for the sake of mere probability. Are you agreed with the Sacred Scriptures as to the Trinity?

Mr. Lanoue.—The word "Trinity" is not to be found in one single instance throughout the Bible. Thus you see that the date of the *quiproquo* is perfectly certain. The Apostle's Creed speaks of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These simply express the three acts by which the Sovereign Being has communicated himself to man—the Creation, the Redemption, and the Sanctification. It does not tell us that the Son is *born* from all eternity, that the

human nature of Jesus is united to his divine nature by hypostasis. Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch, if you wish for precise information, was the first person who invented the word "Trinity."

Mr. Tessier.—Oh! Mr. Lanoue, I really feel my heart relieved! Formerly I felt almost suffocated every time I attempted to pray: I could not tell to which of the three Gods I ought to turn. How beautiful is your idea! But, as to the sacrifice of the Son?

Mr. Lanoue.—Do you not think, that, although the dwelling of God is everywhere, it should be more especially among honest men than among the wicked?

Mr. Tessier.—Certainly.

Mr. Lanoue.—At the advent of Jesus Christ there were little else than wicked men in the world; in consequence of the fall, the Divine Wisdom no longer found access to the heart of man. Banished, as it were, to the skies, it required to descend from thence in order to enlighten the human race. It quitted its Father, to continue the metaphor, and its descent may be looked on as a sort of mediation between God and man. "No one," we are told, "can arrive at the Father but through the Son." God, in fact, is a Being incomprehensible to our minds; but to render himself accessible to fallen man, he was obliged to come into contact with him. He assumed a body, and this Incarnation has been treated as an act of inferiority towards the Divine Essence, which is incommunicable to our senses. The universe could not be deprived of its God, because Jesus Christ descended on our earth. In order to assist us in comprehending this act, a division of the Divine essence was supposed. Prophetic language declared that the Divine Love—the universal Being which never ceases to animate all nature—or in other words, that the Father who had created man—remained in the heavens, whilst his Wisdom, or the Word, descended upon the earth. The latter is therefore said to be the Son of the former. Man, being wicked, supposed that God was irritated against him, for we always attribute our own faults to others; and the Son of God could only come, according to the vulgar prejudice, to appease the anger of his Father. But this inferiority was only apparent, and had reference merely to the redemption.

Mr. Tessier.—But Jesus called himself the Son, and he prayed to his Father.

Mr. Lanoue.—He called himself the Son, but, at the same time, he declared over and over to his disciples that his Father and he were one; that whoever saw him saw the Father. This is plainly declared in so many words by St. John. He prayed to his Father, you say. It is true; but listen to my explanation upon that point.

Mr. Tessier.—I do not lose a single word.

Mr. Lanoue.—Degenerate man had need of a regenerator. This therefore is the part which Jesus Christ came to perform.

Mr. Tessier.—There is not the least doubt of that.

Mr. Lanoue.—As he declared himself to be the way, the truth, and the life, he no doubt was to give us an example of that reformation which he came to introduce.

Mr. Tessier.—He prayed, therefore, in order to teach us to pray? But surely that somewhat resembles a piece of acting.

Mr. Lanoue.—He rendered his humanity Divine, in order to elevate and purify ours. He laid aside the miserable feelings of this world, in order to teach us to do the same. Man is nothingness. The Redeemer, having to assume our nature, was obliged also to abase himself to nothingness. He put on the condition of humanity, and consequently submitted to our trials. In the apparent inferiority established between his life upon earth and that of God in heaven, he prayed to the latter as we do ourselves. Jesus prayed to the superior nature which was in him, that he might arrive at a state of union with it. He annihilated himself as a creature, in order to allow the Divine action to be accomplished within him, precisely as man keeps his corporeal body in subjection, in order that his intellect may shine with purer brilliancy. In a word, our Lord and Master passed through all the successive states which every man experiences who becomes regenerate. He suffered for us, for the Supreme Love itself suffers from the evil which man alone can draw upon it. He prayed, as we every day offer up prayers which are wrung from us by our trials. The God who saved man himself pointed out the way to him. His life was one entire precept, that is why one of the loftiest works of morality which exists among men bears the title of "The Imitation of Jesus Christ." This title is at once an admonition and a proof that everything which the Saviour did, was done in order that we should follow his example.

Mr. Tessier.—I can conceive this truth, that all which happened to Jesus Christ must happen to every Christian. We must all suffer, and die, and rise again, like him, before we can become regenerate. Thus, this language which our Saviour used was intended for us, and not for God himself.

Mr. Lanoue.—That is so evident, that Jesus on another occasion, when praying to his Father at the grave of Lazarus, used these very words—"I know that thou hearest me always; but I said this because of the people which stand by, that they may believe that thou hast sent me." The Almighty had necessarily to make us comprehend the distinction of the two divine faculties by supposing a redemption, since otherwise he could not have given us an example of the means by which we are to return to the Father. The Mediator had

necessarily to address himself to a superior being, who appeared to be distinct from himself, in order that he might conduct men to this Being. By using any other language, the Creator would have acted directly upon man; and if so there could have been no mediation, since between the Creator and the fallen creature there was no longer any point of contact. It was absolutely necessary that God, in order to elevate man to himself, should abase himself to the human condition. In this condition, was not the inaccessible Essence of the Deity in some manner superior to the local and momentary Manifestation of it on earth?

Mr. Tessier.—But when Jesus Christ prayed without witnesses, and suffered the agony of the Cross?

Mr. Lanoue.—The relation between Jesus Christ and the immaterial world did not exist the less when out of the presence of men. In coming to give an example to man, he came also to free him from the infernal influence under which humanity had groaned since the fall. Now, in taking our nature on himself, he placed himself in contact with the same spiritual influences, both good and evil, which act on us. In a word, Jesus Christ subjugated hell, and waged against it a spiritual warfare.

Mr. Tessier.—Excuse me for a moment, if you please. We are falling, it appears to me, into superstition. If hell mean evil, I can conceive that Jesus, in coming to deliver us from it, must have had very severe combats to sustain; nevertheless, the influence of one world upon another does not appear to me very clear.

Mr. Lanoue.—You forget what you admitted in our last conversation, when we were speaking of physical evil.

Mr. Tessier.—I did not think of that. Explained in any other manner indeed, the prayers of our Saviour have no meaning. Reason refuses to acknowledge a Son *born* from all eternity, and seated on the *right hand* of God till the last judgment. It acquiesces, on the contrary, when told of two acts performed by the same being—the one, by which he establishes his seat in the human soul as God Almighty; the other, in which he comes, as the God of love, to re-establish in this polluted soul the effaced image of his principle, and in so doing addresses himself to God Almighty, to whom in fact he wishes to bring back the human race. Thus then, Mr. Lanoue, you recognise Jesus Christ as the only God who has ever existed. Under the name of Jehovah, he is the God of the Old Testament; under that of Jesus, he is the same God descending to material man; under that of the Holy Spirit, he is the same God acting on the spirit of regenerate man. This is much more simple, I acknowledge, than my old ideas on the subject; for you thus make the dogma of the

unity of God, which was formerly proclaimed by all philosophers, a portion of our ordinary religion. There are still, however, many difficulties. You have thrown some light on one dark point, that of prayer.—

Mr. Lanoue.—But I have not yet finished. Observe that when Jesus Christ appears to his disciples after his death, he ceases to speak to them of his Father—that mysterious being to whom he formerly prayed. He does not now say to them, “Adore Jehovah; address yourselves to my Father: he alone is God.” Therefore it is evident that the distinction which he formerly established between himself and the Father, had reference merely to the act of redemption which he came to accomplish. His disciples speak of him alone. We do not find the name of Jehovah used by them on a single occasion. If Jesus Christ be not the only God, why does he so naturally take the place of his Father? If he do not unite all the divinity in his person, how can he suffer those whom he teaches to shift their ground in this manner?

Mr. Tessier.—That is indeed very remarkable. But Bossuet proves the Trinity from that passage in Genesis where God says: “Let us make man in our own image.” We only speak in the plural when we are more than one.

Mr. Lanoue.—Except in the case of kings and authors, who employ this phraseology, which is common to every language. You attach undue importance here to a mere triviality; for observe that in no language whatever has the imperative a first person singular. You know grammar well enough to understand that yourself.

Mr. Tessier.—What, is it so simple as that! To what absence of mind are not great men subject! What do you say, however, about these words of Jesus Christ himself, where he says to his disciples, at the end of the Gospel of St. Matthew: “Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit”? The Trinity, I presume, is plainly indicated here.

Mr. Lanoue.—No doubt—the trinity of action. But there is not a word in that which can lead us to infer the trinity of persons. This was only subsequently invented. In these words Jesus really said to his apostles: “Baptize all nations in the name of God, the Creator, the Regenerator, and the Sanctifier.” The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are to be found in the Bible, no doubt; but only as expressions of the different functions of the same Being, and not as designations of three distinct persons. In the order of simultaneous action, the whole is supposed to produce the part. That which produces is therefore the father; that which is produced is the son. There is no trinity of persons taught in this passage, except for those who are already persuaded of this dogma

Mr. Tessier.—To have done with these quotations from the Bible, we may consider it as proved that the God of the Old Testament is called Jehovah; and that of the New is called Christ, or the Lord. You see, therefore, that there still exist two Deities for him who studies the Sacred Book.

Mr. Lanoue.—True, for him who reads it superficially. In the Old Testament, in fact, when we speak of God it is always under the name of Jehovah; but in the New, when the same God is spoken of, that name is not again employed, but in its place the Lord is always used. Far from inferring from that the existence of two Deities, do you not clearly see that it indicates two successive actions, accomplished each in its own time by the same being, who took a different name at each action? The Jews could only invoke Jehovah in his inaccessible essence; and the Christian only the same Jehovah after he became visible and “manifest in the flesh.”

Mr. Tessier.—That is very clear and precise.

Mr. Lanoue.—And what is equally so is the fact that every time Jesus Christ is announced in the Old Testament by the prophets, Jehovah says himself through their mouth, “*I will come.*” The entire Bible is there to confirm what I say. He has come, and a new name was given to him to express this more direct and more intimate relation towards the human race.

Mr. Tessier.—And so I get rid of a great stumbling-block. How very simple is the idea of but one God! For if there be three Gods, what are the two others? That God should have a son, literally, is an idea too repugnant to be entertained for a moment. In the first place, I could not adore three Gods; then I could not imagine to myself one of these Gods, named the Father, accepting the devotion of another called the Son, and granting pardon to the human race only on the condition of the shedding of his Son's blood. What anger for a Father to display! What hard conditions for a God to exact! Oh! how unfeeling that appeared to me! But for the sacrifice of this Son, God would not have received men into his love! It was necessary that the innocent should expiate the fault of the guilty, and this innocent victim a God. What unheard-of cruelty! Humanity *purchased* by the blood of Him who gave it existence! Oh, how simple is your idea! Expiation and Redemption become both figurative terms. In fact, has not man to *expiate* his criminal inclinations? Is he not a captive whose chain must be broken—whose *ransom* must be *paid*? Let your explanation be compared with all the others which have been propounded, and there is not a single sincere man who will not give it the preference. The old version cannot stand on its feet; but yours is like Nature—the more we dwell upon it the better we comprehend it.

Mr. Lanoue.—Everything depends upon forming an exact

idea of the fall. If it be a sin of pure disobedience, then adieu to redemption. If it be the deviation of a nature from its proper path, we must have a superior nature to guide it back to it. We require a figurative sacrifice to lead us to the real sacrifice which we ourselves have to make.

Mr. Tessier.—I can contain myself no longer ! What wisdom is concealed in the actions of Jesus. But let us look if you please at the other difficulties which arrest me. It seems to me that God lowers himself a little in my thoughts by assuming the human condition, with all the imperfections attendant on it. Had he appeared as God, the entire world would have been at his feet—there can be no doubt of that. If a king wishes to be obeyed by his people, he presents himself as a king, and not as a private individual.

Mr. Lanoue.—Observe this difference : a king orders as a master, and Jesus wished to enlighten us. The law forces us to obedience, wisdom inclines us to it by persuasion. It is a false idea, suggested by our earthly grandeur, which confuses you here, Mr. Tessier. Even in the world a wise man will be cautious of judging people by their appearance ; noise and pomp are only fit to captivate children. The man who affects great airs of importance in speaking to you, is looked upon by you as a charlatan. Crowns and sceptres are often purchased at the price of a nation's blood, while the crown of thorns of Jesus cost no other blood than his own. You reproach him for having lived poor and self-denying, but it is the noblest triumph of wisdom to do so. The greatness of Jesus could not be material ; it was to be entirely moral. Is not his morality sufficiently lofty, his counsels sufficiently sublime for an ambassador from heaven ? He lived as a sage, and kings have since thought it an honour to add his cross to their diadem.

Mr. Tessier.—Yes, Mr. Lanoue, that is true greatness. Jesus is greater than any earthly king, since he presented himself as the king of virtuous men. What a fool I was, with my royal grandeur ! When a king makes his appearance, everybody throws himself at his feet ; but once he is overthrown, everybody insults him. Then there is not an individual who does not revenge himself by contempt for the abasement to which this sovereign grandeur subjected him. Jesus constrained no one. He addressed himself only to men of uprightness and sincerity, and none of these ever denied their king.

Mr. Lanoue.—I beg your pardon, Judas did ; but it is true he went forthwith and hanged himself. Had Judas only betrayed a man worthy of being crucified, he would have defended his conduct in place of showing remorse for it. Thus his remorse can only be accounted for by supposing that he had betrayed virtue.

Mr. Tessier.—That goes straight to the heart. I will not again say that Jesus should have appeared as a king. But tell me why he was obliged to abase himself to our own miserable condition.

Mr. Lanoue.—If a native of civilized Europe conceived the project of enlightening savages, and inducing them by persuasion and example to quit their wandering and precarious life, would he at once display before their astonished eyes all the triumphant applications of the arts and sciences to civilised life? If so, he would dazzle them, and nothing more. They would look on him as one who had nothing in common with them, and would not reform by his example. Far from acting in this way, however, our missionary at first assumes their manners, in order afterwards to induce them to adopt his. He shares for a time their wandering life; he persuades them one day to abandon a vicious custom, the next day another; and thus leads them on, step by step, until at last they are capable of making use of our telescope, or of travelling in our steam-boats.

Mr. Tessier.—But God is all-powerful, and without adopting so many precautions he could have brought man to him by a word.

Mr. Lanoue.—He is powerful, Mr. Tessier; but he is as wise as he is powerful. If by his fiat he had changed the constitution of man, he would have destroyed his free will. Recollect the reason which prevented God from restraining Eve, when she was about to eat the forbidden fruit. He allowed her to fall, that he might not interfere with her liberty. When engaged in our redemption he had to respect this liberty also. It was necessary that we should be left free to reject or adopt the example and counsels of Jesus; and therefore his existence, his word, everything relating to him in short, was of a nature either to be rejected or adopted. If the entire world had been saved by a miracle, you perceive clearly that the liberty of man would have been enchained; persuasion would have had no part to perform; and it is from persuasion alone that the conversion of the sinner can be sincere. You must ever keep in mind that the Deity was obliged to subject himself to the laws which he has established from the beginning for the greatest possible good. But to submit himself to these laws is not to limit his power, it is to give them the unmistakeable stamp of legitimacy. To act upon an eternal, immutable plan, is the characteristic of him who has taken as his name the Eternal and the Infinite.

Mr. Tessier.—That is rather deep for me. But, on the whole, I think I comprehend that if God had saved man by a miracle, he would have changed his present condition. He would have created him a second time, and according to new

laws. Now that which God has once done is so well done that it should always remain the same; in other words, an all-wise being should always act after the same plan.

Mr. Lanoue.—It is impossible to sum up this difficult subject better. You now comprehend that Jesus, in descending to human nature, was only consistent with himself, and respected the laws of divine order. The essence of power of all kinds consists in acting according to laws, but by no means in recognising no laws. It is only things of a similar nature which can be united in a perfect Whole; but in order that God and man should be one, as formerly, it was necessary either that man should ascend to God, or that God should descend to man. It was impossible that man should return to his origin without the divine assistance, since he had assumed a love and intellect which referred everything to himself. A degenerate race, as you said yourself, can never reform itself: fallen humanity had need of a restorer. Fallen into a world where everything is subject to the laws of transmission, man required a regenerator who was not of this world. In a word, it was necessary that God should descend to him. Well, then, what is more natural than to say that the divine wisdom descended into the hearts of mortals?

Mr. Tessier.—Certainly. The Redeemer, as you present him to us, is as easily comprehended as the redemption he accomplished. I should wish, however, to examine once more with you the circumstances of the incarnation, and the numerous difficulties which embarrass me respecting it. For the present, the natural conclusion I draw from all you have just told me is, that it is only by Jesus Christ we are saved. Thus you adopt the maxim that beyond the Church there is no salvation.

Mr. Lanoue.—Yes; if you understand by the Church the universal communion of all regenerate men on earth. Without regeneration there is no salvation, since without it there can be no real virtue. “No man,” said Jesus Christ, “shall see the kingdom of God, unless he be born again.”

Mr. Tessier.—But those who have not had time to make this change? For instance, children who have died in infancy?

Mr. Lanoue.—Children who have died without baptism are, nevertheless, saved; because baptism is only the promise of a future regeneration. The water, which washes away the impurities of the body, represents the regeneration which will in its turn purify the soul.

Mr. Tessier.—Then they enter into heaven with the evil which they inherited from their parents. There is, therefore, evil in heaven, or at least there must be a regeneration there also. Oh! this is an unexpected stumbling-block. Pray who teaches the children their catechism there?

Mr. Lanoue.—Tell me, are our faculties stationary?

Mr. Tessier.—No, certainly; they are continually expanding.

Mr. Lanoue.—Well, the child continually progresses, because endowed with the same faculties as you. The germ is developed equally well without matter as with it. Instead of asking who teaches the catechism in heaven, we must inquire what is the affection which absorbs that of the child, in order to change it and lead it to God. Good affections are doubtless not wanting in heaven. If a single word on earth from the lips of a mother is sufficient to develop virtuous feelings in the breast of the child, will not the angel who receives it in the future life be able to produce the same impression?

Mr. Tessier.—I think it is very likely: and after all there must surely be many good mothers among the angels to fill such an office. It is only necessary to entrust it to women, and the still-born child will soon become as white as snow. That will serve it in place of baptism. But to return to the earth. What do you do with those virtuous men who lived before the Saviour, and who did not become regenerate in our way? Are they damned?

Mr. Lanoue.—There is only one method of becoming regenerate, and that is to combat our natural propensities. But there never was, and there never will be, virtue without this struggle. The virtuous men of whom you speak did become regenerate, therefore, and are in heaven.

Mr. Tessier.—But take care. No effort has any value without Jesus Christ. We may do good for our own sake, but it ought to be done for the sake of the good itself; that is to say, in the sight of God. Now, without revelation, no man can have any real and intrinsic knowledge of God.

Mr. Lanoue.—Nothing can be more certain. But society has never been left without a revelation. When God, as you said the other day, was lost by man, he was immediately again proclaimed, in order that man might never remain without a law. The law promulgated on Mount Sinai was given until the time was come for the sermon upon the Mount. The revelation of Moses, which was known throughout all antiquity, and was introduced among foreign nations, was sufficient to acquaint man that in repressing his propensities with a view to good, he did so in the sight of God. Socrates himself acknowledged that a revelation was necessary to raise us to such a height.

Mr. Tessier.—But if the world is as old as you would have us believe, if there were men before Adam, where was their revelation?

Mr. Lanoue.—They had one without any doubt, for Moses and Joshua refer to books older than theirs, but which have

not come down to us. The East is entirely filled with the traditions of a primitive revelation, traces of which, it is believed, are to be found among the inhabitants of Great Tartary, which is considered the most ancient country of the human race.

Mr. Tessier.—You are about to make a scholar of me. I thought it was in Egypt or India that our writers placed the birth-place of the most ancient nations.

Mr. Lanoue.—All the Eastern nations appear to have had a common origin, and it is from Great Tartary that all probably sprung. Our naturalists find in that country the first traces of the abode of man; our astronomers the earliest discoveries in their science; while historians believe that it was from that country that those countless tribes came which at various epochs have inundated the north and west of Europe.

Mr. Tessier.—It would follow then, from the fact of this primitive revelation, that the greater portion of the dogmas which we find in the East, and which bear a certain resemblance to those of the Christians, have the same origin as they. The Orientals must have retained the first revelation; and this revelation announced the one which we have followed. Thus the incarnations of some Indian god or other whose name I forget, prefigured that of Jesus Christ.

Mr. Lanoue.—The incarnations of Vishnu. You will find there also the origin of the idea of a heaven in a human form, as you yourself observed when reminding me of the god Brahmah, of whom the Brahmins occupy the head, and the Pariahs the feet. In the opinion of the Chinese also, heaven is in the form of a man.

Mr. Tessier.—Your primitive revelation shields me from a criticism with which I have often been met. The partisans of absolute authority refuse to acknowledge innovators in religion, asserting that they are heretics and plagiarists. They can never give you this title. In fact, you are quite as much a Catholic as any of them, if by this word we are to understand what is universal. Your religion does not date from yesterday, since it is in conformity with the primitive revelation, as well as with that of Moses, and the New Testament of Jesus Christ. The divines of all sects have only proclaimed what you here advance.

Mr. Lanoue.—If it appears new, it is only because the oldest truths may appear so when they are reproduced, after being forgotten or unknown during a long lapse of time.

Mr. Tessier.—This is not the place to occupy ourselves with these fine-drawn hypotheses; but I should like to know the use of so many revelations. Was the first, then, not sufficient?

Mr. Lanoue.—No, undoubtedly. Man, although at first

enlightened, fell back into darkness. It was necessary, therefore, to enlighten him a second time.

Mr. Tessier.—But why a third time?

Mr. Lanoue.—Because it is in the nature of love never to tire; and as soon as darkness is spread over the earth, the light from above is sure to descend. It cannot always shine with the same brightness, however, since man is free. Man injures his bodily constitution by excess; but at every attack of disease you see nature endeavours to bring a remedy. The Supreme Physician offers a remedy likewise for every malady of the soul, and that without ever becoming fatigued.

Mr. Tessier.—So, then, you think that if the Gospel should ever prove insufficient, we should have another revelation?

Mr. Lanoue.—This revelation is even promised, since the announcement of it forms the conclusion of the Sacred Volume. The Apocalypse has promised to man that the moment when the Christian faith becomes extinct—when darkness of heart prevails on every side—God will again descend and re-establish his work. This is too conformable to his wisdom to admit of a doubt; only I do not say, like you, that this event will take place when the Gospel proves no longer sufficient. That which comes from God is never useless. I merely say that when the truths of the Gospel shall be obscured, a new revelation will throw fresh light on them. Every revelation refers to those preceding it, and confirms them. Moses refers to one anterior to his own, and our Saviour says himself that he is not come to abolish the law, but to fulfil it. The promises made in the Apocalypse, when realized, will do the same for the Gospel.

Mr. Tessier.—Yes. But who is the Antichrist which is to come? Twenty years ago it was said that the Antichrist was Bonaparte, and in the present day it will perhaps be said that he is St. Simon.

Mr. Lanoue.—The Sacred Volume treats only of the history of humanity in general; the pictures which it draws are representations of good or evil affections. Individuals are used there merely as figures, or types, and Antichrist can signify nothing else. Before you can attempt to explain the drama of the Apocalypse, you will require to study the matter very carefully.

Mr. Tessier.—That is very likely. But in the mean time, Mr. Lanoue, can you tell me in a few words what is your opinion respecting the end of the world? Is it really a resurrection in flesh and blood, in the valley of Jehosaphat—a valley not large enough, perhaps, to contain the dead of one parish?

Mr. Lanoue.—The valley of Jehosaphat was the place specially present to the mind of the prophet when he saw the execution of one of those judgments of the Deity which are accomplished out of the region of time or space, but which man always sees occur in the material world. In the same way St. John says of the event which he announces, that it is to take place immediately. Instead of a time, we are to understand a condition. These judgments are moral actions. The events which take place in them are sentiments revealed to humanity, to which the mind of man ascribes a form. This form does not concern us. Our faith has nothing to do with the sensations of an individual, be he who he may. The event itself is true, since the heart confirms it; but the circumstances, the times, the places, are only the colouring which the peculiar idiosyncrasy of the witness lends them, or rather the form which they assume when passing through his medium.

Mr. Tessier.—You mean, by all this metaphysics, that the judgment announced to man is like a discourse addressed to him in one language, which he himself translates as it were into another. We are told that the love of God will spread itself over the earth. One man will see this event, perhaps, under the image of a dove; another under that of a cloud, or rather an atmosphere radiant with happiness and glory, and penetrating everywhere like dew. God is not supposed to manifest himself in a manner absolutely conformable to these images; they are merely the sensations of an individual in whose mind everything addressed to him assumes an image conformable to his previous character and habits. In this manner probably the prophets saw the locality and the details of the last judgment. They forced heavenly things to assume the measure and dimensions of terrestrial objects. It is taking a lofty view of the subject, it must be confessed, to explain thus the divine revelations. According to you they are ever uniform in their action, and varied only in the images which serve to make them understood. However, I always return to my first objection. The resurrection is plainly announced. That is an article of faith which the orthodox will not readily abandon.

Mr. Lanoue.—It is very surprising that, with all your perspicacity, you attach any importance to so childish an objection.

Mr. Tessier.—But my curiosity is very natural. I do not believe there is a single body in nature which is raised again precisely the same. I do not understand how the body of a man, which has crumbled into dust or been scattered to the winds, is one day to recover the same appearance which it had on earth. If religion made some concessions to common sense,

and abandoned those points, I assure you it could only gain by it.

Mr. Lanoue.—It can make no concessions. It is not religion which is to change. It is man who must change before he can attain to religion. The words of the Sacred Volume cannot be added to or diminished without committing a crime. Everything has been placed there intentionally, even the smallest iota.

Mr. Tessier.—This opinion is very widely received, and I have heard it said that there are people who have counted minutely every word, and even every letter, in the Bible. This unanimous opinion confirms perfectly what you have just said; but that does not explain the resurrection.

Mr. Lanoue.—In speaking of the new heaven and the new earth of the Apocalypse, when we were considering the narrative of Moses, analogy inclined you to admit that at this epoch a new moral regeneration would take place. Is not the resurrection also of which it speaks only a resurrection of the mind? Are you not really resuscitated when you have substituted the love of God in your soul for the destroying selfishness which held you as it were in a state of death? Did you not, when returning to virtue, soar as it were into another and a brighter existence?

Mr. Tessier.—Oh, Mr. Lanoue, this is so simple as to require no evidence. Besides, your ideas are confirmed by the Gospel. Our Saviour says of those who follow him, "They have passed from death unto life." The dead of whom the Holy Scriptures speak are men who are living indeed as regards material life, but in whom the spiritual life—the only life which has any reality—is extinguished. The dead of the Apocalypse will be men who are strangers to every religious idea and sentiment, but I can readily believe they will be resuscitated. See what it is to be engrossed in matter. Formerly I understood nothing of the subject; and when I read these words of our Saviour, "Let the dead bury their dead," I totally despaired of ever explaining them; but now I feel all their force. How many dead are there among those who are thought to be animated with the fire of love! And what is life, at bottom, if it be not love? But what of this sun, and those stars, that are described as falling upon our earth, which is smaller than the smallest among them?

Mr. Lanoue.—You saw in the account which Moses gives us of the creation, that material things are used as emblems of moral qualities. It is the same here. If heaven and earth mean a state of peace in the regenerate man; if a new heaven is necessary to enlighten him, and a new earth to exercise his love: the stars which vanish away represent natural truth—

the only truth which is known to fallen man—disappearing to make place for truth of a superior order. In this picture described by St. John, material nature is no more treated of than in the Mosaic account. The latter did not tell us that the universe commenced on such a day; the former did not mean to say it should end on such another day. Nature, immortal like its Author, is the manifestation of supreme love and wisdom. It can no more cease to exist than God himself.

Mr. Tessier.—David says, in fact, that the things which are created have been established to exist throughout all ages. Thus there is no end of the world! How this sad prospect used to puzzle and distress me! Your idea is as philosophical as it is consoling. The God who regenerated man at the beginning of society, regenerated him again in the reign of Tiberius, and will regenerate him a third time, without material nature being in any way concerned in the action, which is a purely spiritual one. It is so simple, that I require the testimony of Scripture before I can believe it.

Mr. Lanoue.—The Scripture, which you have just quoted so happily yourself, nowhere speaks of the end of the world. This latter is a vulgar opinion, and entirely untenable. The Sacred Word says positively *consummatio seculi*—the end of an age or epoch—that is to say, the end of the state of society existing at that epoch. The last judgment is that which supreme justice is to pronounce upon the souls of men at any given time. This meaning is so plain that the coming of Jesus Christ in the Gospel is called the judgment. “Now,” says the Messiah, “is the judgment.” You see plainly that at that time the heaven and the earth, the sun and the moon, were not changed. In the second place, it is said distinctly in the Gospel that on that day two men shall be working in a field, one shall be taken and the other shall be left; so that, as some men are to survive this event, the habitable earth cannot be destroyed.

Mr. Tessier.—Oh, Mr. Lanoue, I did well to persist. Your explanation has removed the most painful doubts respecting the veracity of the Sacred Scriptures. God cannot employ two kinds of language so opposed to each other. “What!” I said to myself, “does Nature only speak to me of his wisdom, and the Sacred Volume only present me things revolting to my reason! Such an anomaly is not possible.” No end to the world!—what a grand idea! Do you know what philosophy gains by this concession? At all times philosophy and religion have been in open conflict. The first said to man, “This universe is a thing worthy of occupying your meditations eternally;” the second told him, “All this is mere vanity, and shall one day pass away like a shadow.” The consequence of

this was, that the less man admired God in his works, the more pious was he esteemed. Men reproached themselves for their admiration, in order that they might thus force themselves to fix their thoughts on the gloomy and ridiculous idea of annihilation. Look you, Mr. Lanoue, I know philosophers who would have become Christians had they been able to reconcile that legitimate and reasonable admiration which the spectacle of the universe calls forth, with the sombre and cruel idea of the last judgment, which is to reduce everything to dust, as if God repented him of what he had done. But such an event will at least surprise the impious. The whole world will then undoubtedly become Christian, since God is to appear in person.

Mr. Lanoue.—God never forces the free will of man. He will come, not to oblige him to enter on the proper path, but to point him out the way. Free worship is the only true worship. In fact, to constrain one's self is an act of liberty: to be constrained is not so. The means which he will employ at the last judgment will be doubtless to offer to man's intellect food more suitable for it. Human reason, freed from the yoke of human authority and the fetters of prejudice, will then be better fitted to seize upon divine truths, veiled till that time beneath a cloud. The Gospel says that the coming of Christ shall not take place with splendour—"No man shall be able to say, He is here, or he is there." Do not these expressions point to the reign of truth, which has no external splendour, and which only exercises a sway over the soul? After this event as before it there will be impious men, because there will always be free beings. But men anxious, as you are, Mr. Tessier, to know and do the will of God, will find in the moral assistance thus afforded them by Providence, the means of escaping from despair and doubt. Light from above will dissipate the darkness generated by our incredulous sciences; in short, a new religion, at once Christian and philosophical, will again establish on a firm basis that edifice which the attacks of the sceptics had apparently overturned; the Bible will become accessible to the understanding; matters of faith will become open to the comprehension; active life will be substituted for contemplation; pious and benevolent deeds take the place of aimless sermons: in short, the path of life will be freed from the brambles which encumber it, and laid open to all the world. Does not that appear to you equally beautiful and probable?

Mr. Tessier.—Oh, yes, Mr. Lanoue. When God manifests himself anywhere, his action is always at once simple and magnificent. Evident to some, it is concealed from others. Your Apocalypse is as consoling as your Creation; but this

new dispensation of divine light resembles greatly what St. Simon calls the progress of humanity.

Mr. Lanoue.—Yes; but St. Simon only repeated on that subject what another had said before him. This other ambassador—if I may so call him—this other Apostle of the new kingdom, was a commentator on the Apocalypse called Swedenborg. This author has apprized us that the New Jerusalem is to be a completion of Christianity, and as such, to be more clear and rational than any of the communions which have hitherto existed.

Mr. Tessier.—I confess that I am unwilling to view this book, like Bossuet, as a historical prediction of the events of this world. These events appear to me too petty for God to deign to trace the picture of them in advance, like the epic poets. Again, when I am told that Babylon the great harlot is Rome, I can only see in that the criticism of party spirit. Protestants have been very glad, no doubt, to seize upon this occasion of mortifying their adversaries. But I can see nothing in such a dogma but a proof how widely the human mind may err. The Catholics might retort on their enemies that the great red dragon is nothing else than the Reformed Church, and in my opinion the one explanation is quite as probable as the other. I have formed a more rational idea of the Apocalypse; I believe it is an emblem of the efforts and trials of man through life, and the peace which awaits him at the end, viewed through the medium of Eastern allegory.

Mr. Lanoue.—Say rather through the medium of *extasis* or *clairvoyance*, which, as you know, employs deformed objects as the expression of depraved sentiments, so that, when we think of evil, we always see monstrous figures. According to this theory, the Apocalypse is only a narrative of the sensations of one transported by the spiritual vision into the spiritual world.

Mr. Tessier.—This renders the thing probable enough. It now remains to be seen why the future is announced there; but as, according to your theory, there is only one sort of time for the soul, the future may have appeared the present to it. St. John therefore did not see as present the future things of the world, but those of the soul.

Mr. Lanoue.—Of the soul in its relations to God: that is to say, of religion. The Sacred Volume, from beginning to end, treats only of such subjects. Thus Ezekiel, in his visions, saw the end of the Jewish Church and the dawn of Christianity which succeeded it. St. John, in a wonderful succession of pictures, almost identical in their nature with those of Ezekiel because drawn from the same source, likewise saw the fall of Christianity and the commencement of a new dispensation of divine light. He has described under the image of a harlot the

adulterated good in this religion; while he has painted empty faith in it without corresponding works, under the emblem of a dragon. These are two things which ever accompany the decay of religion. Whether there be existing Churches answering to these designations or not is of little consequence to us at present. The fact remains that there are people who degrade religion into a species of adultery, in proportion as it draws near its close; as there are others who reduce its dogmas to barren articles of belief, the fruits of a cold and lifeless understanding. These two classes are the real followers of those whom the Apostle calls Babylon and the Dragon, and the fact of their existence absolves him from the charge of exaggeration. Both must necessarily yield to the divine power which is to restore its dilapidated work. After their defeat, the pure doctrine, which the prophet calls the New Jerusalem, must necessarily be established. If that is not clear and probable, there is nothing clear in this world.

Mr. Tessier.—According to this theory, there are Babylonians among the Protestants themselves, just as there are followers of the Dragon among the Roman Catholics. This is giving every one his due; and your idea would be widely admitted if it were known. But this New Jerusalem which is to descend from heaven, what is it to be?

Mr. Lanoue.—It is a city in the real acceptance of the word; that is to say a new association, and not a material city. This is so clear that we need not pause upon it. A new doctrine will at this epoch be received into the heart of regenerate man; that is the whole mystery. It is said that this city is square, to indicate that in it the Good is in the same proportion as the True.

Mr. Tessier.—Oh, Mr. Lanoue, that is admirable. Such a city might consequently descend from heaven without its being perceived by any one.

Mr. Lanoue.—Do we perceive the diffusion of a religious doctrine, or of a philosophic truth, otherwise than by the union of those who adopt it?

Mr. Tessier.—But St. John says that Jesus shall descend from heaven in person, borne upon the clouds.

Mr. Lanoue.—He will descend, as every truth emanating from him descends; he will appear in the Sacred Volume and in the hearts of the regenerated. He will dissipate the clouds which surrounded it, or, in other words, he will give the intellect the means of penetrating the obscure sense of this book. This is what he has inspired Swedenborg to do; this is what St. Simon has not been able to accomplish. You must judge of the ambassador according to his credentials.

Mr. Tessier.—Are there no other proofs than this of the establishment of the New Jerusalem?

Mr. Lanoue.—In the first place, this lucid and complete interpretation of the Sacred Volume will leave no more doubt as to the presence of the Lord. In the second place, here is another circumstance indicated by himself: "When there shall be no more faith upon the earth," said the Me-siah to his disciples, "the day of the Lord shall come." You can easily conceive, in fact, that it is just when man has most need of the divine light that the mercy of the Most High will come to his assistance. The divine aid is always granted to man in proportion to his wants. The apostle says, that when you see the leaves of the fig-tree the summer is near. I tell you, that when you see faith completely extinct in the masses, at the same time that the religious sentiment begins to bud in the heart of certain individuals more enlightened than the rest; when you see the Bible profaned, mutilated, and at the same time interpreted in a manner more plain and convincing than ever; you may prepare for this grand event, you may say that the last judgment is about to be accomplished, and the New Jerusalem to descend upon the earth.

Mr. Tessier.—But our own age has many points of resemblance to the epoch you mention. I perceive now why the Socialists obtain so many followers. They speak of an event promised, expected, and already realized—if not in action, at least in those minds which receive the divine influence. Far from combating your doctrine, they support it with all the plausibility of their pretensions. The more they prove that the past is departed, that the universe is in expectation of a new religion, the more they invite calm and reflecting minds to search for this religion. After having examined the doctrines of St. Simon, which meet none of the wants of the human heart, and all whose hopes are bounded by this life, while they do not attempt to explain the Holy Book, it is quite natural that wise men should give their attention to a religion which is as true as nature, as figurative and at the same time as real as the Inspired Volume.

Mr. Lanoue.—The Socialists proclaim everything which the New Jerusalem announces. But, although they announce the new kingdom, they are not the less blind and unconscious agents. The prophetic spirit makes use of them as instruments to publish to the world the third regeneration of the human species, but they were not the first to make it known. Swedenborg, in the middle of the last century, predicted this providential event. St. Simon, who died a few years ago, had only the merit of remarking more than any other the superior influences which are at work to modify society in our times. That is not enough, however, to make an apostle. The Germans would have quite as much right to make an apostle of the philosopher Lessing, who, in 1785, proved, in a work on

the education of the human race, that the Mosaic and the Christian laws were about to receive a modification—in a word, that a *third epoch* was about to commence.

Mr. Tessier.—If the third epoch is being established, Swedenborg, at all events, has the honour of being the first to announce it. I shall, therefore, procure the writings of Swedenborg, and study with him the emblems of the Apocalypse, and if possible find out their real applications. To anticipate however, will he tell me, for instance, the signification of the white horse which is spoken of in the Apocalypse? Amongst all the emblems of that book this is not the least curious.

Mr. Lanoue.—Among the ancients the horse signified intellect. The horse, in fact, passes through material space as our mind moves in the regions of thought. Our every-day language confirms this idea, when it says that our understanding gallops, is restive, or runs away with us. The horse among the ancients was an attribute of the poetic imagination. The horse Pegasus conducted the poets to Parnassus.

Mr. Tessier.—Or to an hospital, as has been since said.

Mr. Lanoue.—Observe, also, that the most intellectual people of antiquity, the Athenians, received a horse from Neptune. And when Ulysses invented a stratagem by which to take Troy, it was inside a wooden horse that the Greeks procured admission into the city of Priam. Lastly, the poet of the most exalted imagination, Ariosto, represents his heroes as travelling in the air on hippogriffs. In accordance with this, nothing was more simple than to designate pure intellect, truth without alloy, under the striking emblem of a white horse.

Mr. Tessier.—And the sword which St. John saw issuing from the mouth of the Lord?

Mr. Lanoue.—To solve this, we do not require any lengthened explanations. We every day speak of the sword of the Word; and what is in the present day a metaphor was formerly an emblem. A two-edged sword signifies a word which penetrates to the very marrow of those who hear it, and which makes the Truth be understood in the same proportion as the Good which is inseparable from it.

Mr. Tessier.—Thanks, Mr. Lanoue. From what I have just heard, I can understand that Swedenborg announces simply a new regeneration of mankind; and a Christian regeneration, because there can be no other. This idea, if it be only an idea, is very consoling. If it be a divine promise, I do not see that there can be any great risk in accepting it. If any one believes that it is indispensable, before attaching credit to it, to adopt the very terms which Swedenborg uses in describing it, we might reply as you did to me just now re-

specting the prophets of the Old Testament who spoke of the valley of Jehosaphat. "The details given by the new prophet," we might say to him, "are the precise form which this event took in his thought. But to insist on this form being made an article of faith, would be mere superstition and would outrage at once common sense and religion. There is no absolute heaven; there is therefore no absolute and immutable form in the thoughts which come from heaven."

Mr. Lanoue.—You will soon be able, my dear friend, to do without an instructor. Add, that this thought which comes from heaven is in itself a form, although that form be varied according to the condition of the individual who receives it.

Mr. Tessier.—Nothing can be more precise, Mr. Lanoue. There are forms in heaven since there are thoughts there. I do not forget our last conversation.

Mr. Lanoue.—Consequently, Swedenborg saw those forms. His credentials are those of a seer, an ecstatic, or to use the modern phrase, a clairvoyant. The very things which would shock others in his visions should reassure you. In fact, if you approved of all that he said to you, how could you be sure that it was not a system brought forth by human reason, and which, like all other systems, may be some day destroyed by it? A guarantee is necessary for these finger-posts to another world. It must be proved that they have been seen.

Mr. Tessier.—That is absolutely necessary. A system, no matter how well recommended, is always a mere probability. We only arrive at certainty by sensation. A knowledge of divine things requires an organ to make us acquainted with them, as a knowledge of natural things requires its organs. Man, in my opinion, is not shut up in his five senses, and therefore the modes of perception of the new apostle do not alarm me at all. I should not feel myself very firm in my stirrups, however, if I read that this author had seen angels in human form, walking, drinking, eating, and chatting with each other, and having houses, cities, and assemblies.

Mr. Lanoue.—Every form being an emblem, the drama offered to you would have in your eyes all the interest of an allegory. That is a sufficient reason for your not being scandalised by it. You would translate these images by their corresponding sentiments, and everything would appear simple and probable.

Mr. Tessier.—No doubt; but these bodies without flesh, those houses without stones, are enough to turn one's brain.

Mr. Lanoue.—You ought to remember, however, what I said yesterday about the difference between spiritual and natural substance. In the state of sleep there exist for you substances which are not solid. There is a life of action on a stage peopled with forms; there is a scene in which events

pass as they do in real life. The difference between ecstatic sleep and that of ordinary dreaming is exactly the same as between the somnambulist and the prophet, viz., a difference of degree. Both outstrip the flight of time; both are independent of space; but the one enters this new world with the ideas of a natural man, and sees only natural forms: the other with the sensations of a spiritual man, and sees the images which are the expressions of these sensations. The substance of these images is not in the province of ordinary touch or view, and it is therefore useless to appeal to the earthly senses as judges.

Mr. Tessier.—That is true and just; as we do not appeal to the judgment of a deaf man on the subject of music, we should not ask our senses to form an exact notion of things which are out of their reach. This being the case, I believe I shall be able to read Swedenborg without stumbling. But to resume the subject on which we were speaking. You have made me acquainted with the Redemption; I must now know something more of the Redeemer. This mortal flesh assumed by Creative Power is a thing which still perplexes me a little. We must come back to this in our next conversation. When I have some explanation on this point, Mr. Lanoue, I shall have nothing more to ask you. I agree, in fact, as to the original degradation and the subsequent regeneration of man. One must be mad not to see that man can only reform through love; and seeing that, one must be still more insane not to attribute this effect to divine assistance. For, as the Gospel says, "man can do nothing if it be not given him from on high." There is therefore no mystery in the matter but the means specially employed by God for this purpose; there is the difficulty. I could never have believed, Mr. Lanoue, that my first question, which you answered so long ago, would have led us so far.

Saying these words, for fear of enduring a fresh lecture upon his insatiable curiosity, the notary hastily saluted his instructor, and withdrew.

NINTH CONVERSATION.

PROOFS OF THE REDEMPTION.

NEVER was revolution more complete than that which had taken place in the ideas of the notary. In a few days, all the enigmas which puzzled him had been solved to his entire satisfaction. Morality in his eyes had now a real basis, borrowed from human nature. He now understood by undoubted experience that good was not a propensity, but a reform; and on this point the Sacred Book gave him an additional guarantee. The Bible now presented itself to his eyes as the theory of the moral man alternately removed from, and reunited to, God. Its literal sense, which had so often shocked or puzzled him, he saw was a series of symbols. He could now contemplate the other world without being dazzled, and without any aid but the light of his natural reason, which told him that the Creator has not two measures, and that he is the same God in the two worlds. Spiritual forms caused him no more uneasiness. The Trinity of persons, which estranges so many persons from practical Christianity, was no longer a mystery in his eyes. Three different names given to three attributes of the same Being, seemed to him the most natural thing in the world. His only embarrassment was caused by this mysterious personage, without whom, nevertheless, there could be no redemption. Thinking to arrive at the truth on this point in a few questions at most, Mr. Tessier took his way to Mr. Lanoue's, and endeavouring to be as brief as possible, in order that he might obtain a clear and precise answer, "There is nothing," said he, "which perplexes me at present, except this flesh which the Divine Truth assumed."

Mr. Lanoue.—If your son fell into the water, would you save him by merely planning and contriving?

Mr. Tessier.—Certainly not. He would be drowned while I was thinking of it. I would plunge in after him.

Mr. Lanoue.—God, too, descended into the abyss in which we were sunk. Mark this carefully: God is a spirit. Had he acted upon man by the mind alone, he would have acted as you would have done if you had remained upon the bank and contented yourself with offering up prayers for your child. He was obliged to take a material form in order to have some point of contact with material man. It is a law of this world that before a thing can be manifested, it must become of the same nature as those to whom it is manifested. If I wish to

seize a person on the road, I cannot do this by my will alone: it is absolutely necessary that my will should descend into my arms, and it is by the material organ that I execute the mental intention.

Mr. Tessier.—Yes; but God can do everything.

Mr. Lanoue.—Have you already forgotten that he does everything according to the rules of order. He can do everything, but always in accordance with his own laws. If he could do anything not in accordance with them, he would be no longer the Supreme Wisdom. Well then, God descended materially upon the earth, and assumed a body, in order that the redemption might not be a mere philosophical speculation, having its existence only in the brain, but a positive fact, capable of material proofs, the evidence of which could be obtained at all times by the sincere inquirer.

Mr. Tessier.—And yet these proofs are often denied. Another incarnation would be absolutely necessary to convince us. Why did God manifest himself only once, two thousand years ago, and that only in an obscure corner of the world? Those who have lived since that time have ardently wished to see him for themselves.

Mr. Lanoue.—Take care, Mr. Tessier, that your remark does not display mere thoughtlessness, instead of a rational spirit of inquiry. If you think you have a right to insist that God should become incarnate in your time, your son will make the same pretensions after you. His son will demand, in his turn, an equal privilege. Nay more, those who lived immediately after Jesus might have insisted that the fact should be repeated for them. In every portion of the globe, men would have the same desires, and God would seem unjust, if, having manifested himself to some men, there should remain a single individual who had not received that favour from him.

Mr. Tessier.—Well, and it seems to me their wish would be only reasonable.

Mr. Lanoue.—It was in this manner that God acted before the fall. Since that time another mode of action became necessary. Shall God be subject to the ideas which man has formed of order, and not to order itself? The supreme law declares that here below everything which once appears shall not appear again—the tomb does not restore its prey. Everything which has life possesses it for a given time, and in a determinate place. In assuming flesh God lived for a certain portion of time, and he was limited to a special portion of material space. His interior manifestation in the conscience of the virtuous man has neither time nor space; it is for all ages, and for all men who wish to receive it, without a single exception. But his material manifestation had necessarily to take a date and a fixed country. The fact of his

terrestrial existence necessarily occurred in a time which has passed away, never to return, and before witnesses who are dead since the event. It is thus that all facts are accomplished on our earth. Having descended voluntarily into time and space, God was obliged to submit himself to these two modes of existence; it was necessary that his days should be counted like our own, since they were a portion of duration; it was requisite that his material body should be seen, because it acted in this world, which is pure matter. To appear in all ages, and in all places at once, is only possible to pure thought—but impossible to thought when manifested and put in action. Now Jesus came to accomplish an action; it was necessary for him, therefore, to conform himself to the law of this world, in which all actions are accomplished. This is a law of nature itself.

Mr. Tessier.—But, nevertheless, it seems to me you admit that God, in descending to us, became material, and that is contrary to his essence. This has need of explanation.

Mr. Lanoue.—You acknowledge with me that if God had not enlightened and reformed man, the latter, being born with a depraved love, would have been lost without resource?

Mr. Tessier.—Certainly.

Mr. Lanoue.—You acknowledge again that there was no other means of bringing back man into the true path but to infuse into his soul a ray of divine wisdom? Nothing but real love is capable of purifying a depraved soul.

Mr. Tessier.—Incontestably.

Mr. Lanoue.—Well then, how do you think that divine wisdom ought to have enlightened man?

Mr. Tessier.—By descending into his heart, and inspiring him with new inclinations. But it was not necessary to assume a body for that.

Mr. Lanoue.—But, my dear friend, you do not remark that if God had inspired man with new inclinations he would have done our own work—he would have annihilated our free will—he would have made so many gods of us, which implies a contradiction. Man must be warned that his inclinations are vicious, in order that he may reform them himself. Now the voice of God within man no longer warned him, as before the fall, since he had expelled it. What other then but a human voice could warn him? Divine wisdom was obliged to take a palpable body, in order that its words and example might be transmitted to men in a purely human manner, and might serve them as admonitions. If God had not assumed flesh, what means could he have employed to establish his Word upon the earth materially, and make it serve as a law to humanity here below? Should he have allowed a book, ready printed, to descend miraculously from heaven?

Mr. Tessier.—Men would at first have been afraid of it. Afterwards they would have acted like the frogs which leaped fearlessly on the log which at first impressed them with so much respect.

Mr. Lanoue.—As there can be no book without paper, ink, and types, all of which are material means of conveying moral truth to the world, so there was, in like manner, no means for virtue in its essence to make itself heard by men, except by assimilating itself to them. There was no means of presenting the life of our model to us if the personage represented were not really seen by the painter. In short, his words could only be written in a book after having been previously heard. To enlighten our darkened understanding it was not possible that God should descend within us, for he would thus have made himself our conscience, and we should have had nothing whatever to do. It was necessary for him to act as something exterior to our being, which gave us the liberty and the merit of acting for ourselves, of recognising the truth by our own experience. Now in order to act on us from without, God, unless he had descended from heaven full-grown, must have been born like a man, and presented himself to men as such. The supreme wisdom, in short, took an envelope or covering similar to that which genius and purity every day assume. Without a miracle which would have prostrated us, could he have acted otherwise? I put it to you candidly, Mr. Tessier, would you not prefer receiving the truth from a man whose soul was divine by its essence, to receiving it in a manner which was entirely foreign to your organization, and one which would have deranged all the laws of nature?

Mr. Tessier.—Your argument appears to me convincing. But these laws of nature, did not God create them? I do not perceive what theory you deduce from the fact.

Mr. Lanoue.—I shall give you some explanations on this point, which I venture to believe will satisfy you completely. The difference which exists between the spiritual and the natural, is not an insensible passage from the one to the other. The changing of water to a state of gas by evaporation, and from that to ether by rarefaction, can give us no idea of matter becoming spirit.

Mr. Tessier.—That is incontestable. It is in vain that I attempt to render a material body as subtile as possible; I should never produce intelligence from it. And yet the mind is not a breath or an emanation; it is a being which has nothing in common with this other being which I call my body.

Mr. Lanoue.—The first being is the cause of the effects which the second is the means of producing. The one lives and inhabits the world where Causes exist, the other lives and inhabits the world where Effects exist. The degrees

which separate them are precisely those which separate the anterior from the posterior. To the one belong the thought and intention, which are in the first degree; to the other, the word and action, which are in the second. These degrees prove to you, by the way, the futility of the efforts of those who endeavour by the most minute observation to arrive at the idea of an immaterial being from that of a sensible one.

Mr. Tessier.—In fact, they will never find in an animated body anything but the machinery necessary for an action, but not the thought, intention, and purpose concealed in that machinery. The first degree is completely included in the last, like the taste in a pear, or the perfume in a rose—is it not? The soul can no more be discovered by the scalpel of the anatomist than the taste of fruit or the odour of the flower can be seen by pounding them in a mortar.

Mr. Lanoue.—Add to your ingenious comparison that to seize this taste and perfume an organ is necessary, different from that which analyses the various parts of the body. We have on earth organs for material things; but these are of no use for spiritual things. The latter have their peculiar organs, just as the body has its own.

Mr. Tessier.—Your degrees give me a very strong proof of the existence, and, at the same time, of the immortality of the soul.

Mr. Lanoue.—Let us come to the fact, if you please. I shall make use of the comparison which you have suggested. The perfume of a flower is, in the material degree, different from that of its chemical composition. Before the perfume could be manifested, the envelope was necessary; and in like manner, before thought can be put in execution, it must assume a body. In a word, before cause can produce effect, it must become action, instead of mere intellect which it was. In order that the spiritual may descend into the natural—the only means whereby it can assume an existence—it must literally become natural. The Mediator is the speech or Word. God, as supreme cause of everything which exists, inhabits the world of causes; while man, separated from God, is only in the world of effects. These two worlds represent two degrees very distinctly separated from one another; to unite them in a single degree there is but one means—that which nature and good sense point out to us every day—namely, for the cause to become effect. Acting as cause, God remains in the superior degree inaccessible to mortal man when limited to his own senses; acting as effect, He identifies himself with matter. There was absolutely no other means for God to communicate with man but by making himself man. Things which are identical can alone unite; every cause acts upon matter only by means of an organ or instrument.

Mr. Tessier.—And as every instrument is very evidently an argument rendered sensible, the nature taken by Jesus Christ was also a love manifested. This theory of degrees resembles your beautiful law of order. By acting in accordance with it, the Deity in fact proved himself greater than if he had saved man by a miracle. There is no doubt of it. This law of order to which God submits himself, that he may be always the same, and remain consistent with his first conception, is a magnificent idea, I acknowledge. I should not like to be forced to believe by enchantment; I prefer to have the liberty of deciding for myself. But for this purpose we have need of advice and counsel, and I acknowledge that to receive these from a being who has taken my nature seems to me perfectly natural.

Mr. Lanoue.—And then the written life of this being takes its place among historical facts, and it is only by means of these facts that generations are instructed. Each generation does not commence this work for itself; it makes use of what its ancestors bequeathed to it. Thus the life and words of Jesus become facts, and are bequeathed to the entire human race by the most natural means in the world. Is not this the case?

Mr. Tessier.—No doubt. If the Gospel were not a book, it would be a voice issuing from the clouds and addressed to each man. Now man must be instructed according to the ways of humanity. Only tell me is this work well attested?

Mr. Lanoue.—Reflect a little upon this—all the attestations in the world are useless to you. Are the contents of this book true or not? The question is reduced to that. It might be the work of other authors than those whose names it bears, and yet its precepts might not be less the truth on that account. Now, as the truth which reforms us cannot proceed from man corrupted as he is by birth, it would always follow that, whatever may be the interpretations of the book, or the pious frauds of the authors, if it contains the truth it is from God.

Mr. Tessier.—The argument is forcible. But I should be glad to know if there be really no imposture.

Mr. Lanoue.—How do you think that any person could have imagined the ideal perfection presented in the life of Jesus, if the writer had not had the model before his eyes? How could fallen man have invented a regeneration? It would surely have been a hundred times more astonishing if the Gospel had been invented than if it had been composed after a model. And then what could be the date of this invention? It is not of yesterday, certainly. It does not date from the past year either. Go back from year to year, from age to age, and at last you arrive at the epoch of the evange-

lists themselves. Literary criticism acknowledges this fact, of which there is not the least shadow of a doubt.

Mr. Tessier.—I have seen many sceptics; but there is not one of them who would say that the Bible was fabricated in such a year, and written by such or such persons. They all go back as far at least as sixteen or seventeen centuries.

Mr. Lanoue.—It was not in the first two ages of the Christian era that this book was invented; for the apostles and their successors lived at that time, and no claim was made to the authorship. Christianity has never been totally objected to as a fabrication; the philosophers and great men of the world, disgusted by the literal sense of the Sacred Books, have indeed turned them into ridicule, as the Emperor Julian did; but even he did not venture to assert that Jesus Christ never existed.

Mr. Tessier.—Had he read the first chapter of Genesis in the manner which you have taught me, he would have been more circumspect, I presume, since he attacked improbabilities which really are not to be found in the book. But could not the apostles have invented the character of Jesus Christ?

Mr. Lanoue.—They did not even comprehend their master; how then could they have invented such a person? Jesus was incomprehensible to the apostles themselves, how then could they conceive the idea of presenting him to others? Feeble and timid whilst he lived, it was only after his death that their eyes were opened, that they recognised and defended him. Could they have invented also their past weakness and subsequent strength? That is an absurdity which requires no refutation. Besides, to invent in this case means to lie, and could they have been false witnesses who proclaimed to men the punishment of falsehood—who died for the truth—whose only hope was in the life to come?

Mr. Tessier.—It is impossible; there is a force of moral truth in these men which excludes all suspicion of falsehood.

Mr. Lanoue.—That is not all. To invent such a book is to suppose the inventors capable of a great conception of genius. What! did things which were left undiscovered by Plato, Cicero, and all the great men of antiquity, flow naturally from the pens of a few poor unlettered Galileans? Did ignorance bring forth the most sublime science? To say so would be sheer extravagance. The Gospel can have no other author than Jesus Christ himself. To maintain a different opinion is not to exhibit a love of truth, but a love of paradox—it is to “kick against the pricks,” as St. Paul says. And then for what purpose could the apostles have invented the life of Jesus? It was not to spread their own glory certainly; unless they had seen him they never would have thought of holding up to the admiration of the world a man in

whose face during his lifetime the Roman soldiers had spat. People choose their heroes better, when they wish themselves applauded. Was it to gain a fortune then? What a curious way they took to gain a fortune! To carry on their bosoms the cross upon which their master had been nailed, was not the best means of acquiring earthly treasure. We can no longer doubt the testimony of the apostles; they were witnesses who sealed their testimony with their blood!

Mr. Tessier.—But people may become followers of a sect through obstinacy.

Mr. Lanoue.—Yes; but that necessarily supposes the existence of a founder of the sect. Blind obstinacy in maintaining anything does not authorize us to call in question the thing itself, but simply to deny that it is such as it has been presented to us. Well, even admitting that if the apostles through obstinacy asserted facts regarding their master which were contested by others, it only proves that this master must have previously existed. Others denounced him as an impostor; his apostles maintained that he was God. We are competent judges in the case, even without the testimony of the apostles. He who spoke as Jesus Christ did, is God without doubt, since he has offered us, pure and without alloy, that which can only come from God himself: I mean the truth. Obstinacy, besides, is a forbidden passion, and is far removed from the moderation which we so much admire in the apostles. St. Peter, for example, who three times denied his master while still on earth, would have denied him much more readily when he no longer existed if he had not felt an inward conviction that he was not a dupe; if remorse had not whispered to him, "Will you deny him now when you know who he was?"

Mr. Tessier.—You speak like a man convinced of the truth of what he asserts, Mr. Lanoue, and you impart something of your own enthusiasm to me. Tell me, however, if it is not possible that Jesus Christ may have been a man superior to others, a prophet like those of the Old Testament. He would not be the less on that account, in my eyes, the Son of God; for if God has adopted children, if mortals are worthy of being called his sons, they must doubtless be virtuous men.

Mr. Lanoue.—If Jesus Christ had been only a man, how could a man, born like us all with original sin, be able to ameliorate the human species? A pure germ, you told me, was necessary to re-establish the human race in its primitive condition. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, that which is born of the spirit is spirit," says the Gospel. You see that everything which is born of the flesh, according to the law of transmission, which you have yourself recognised in all organized beings, would be vicious. Jesus Christ was

necessarily not a mortal, because if so this vice of birth would have rendered him absolutely incapable of being a redeemer. You will observe, besides, that in this case when Jesus said to us, speaking of himself, that he was God, he would have lied! Think well of that—a lie in the mouth of Jesus Christ!

Mr. Tessier.—That is blasphemy!

Mr. Lanoue.—The entire of the Old Testament is filled with announcements of Jesus Christ as God. He whom the prophecies allude to must therefore have been God; we cannot escape from the conclusion. If not, find me another person to whose life the biblical prophecies can be rationally applied. If no such persons appeared before him, it is he who must be considered as the promised God; or else, like the Jews, we must still look for the Messiah.

Mr. Tessier.—Heaven preserve me from becoming a Jew! But why did they not recognise the Messiah as such? That would be a great inducement for me to believe. What! the people among whom he lived rejected him, and you expect that I, who live two thousand years later should adore him! You must acknowledge that this is a little difficult.

Mr. Lanoue.—I ask you in return why men, when blinded by their passions, reject the truth? Merely because the truth does not flatter them. Your argument is very feeble, Mr. Tessier. The Bible, written in the allegorical style, of which I have given you examples, announced to the Jews, who expected a Messiah, the coming of a monarch who was to render them victorious over their enemies, whose kingdom would have no end, but would extend itself over all the nations of the world. They said to themselves, in the pride of their hearts, "What a glory for Jerusalem; what riches, what honours will not this eternal kingdom bring to us!" When Jesus came to deliver them from their passions, they could not comprehend that these passions were the enemies spoken of; when they saw the ignominy of his cross, they could not recognise the earthly conqueror whom they expected; when they saw his spiritual kingdom extending itself, they never dreamed that this was the kingdom from which they had expected so much glory and riches.

Mr. Tessier.—Oh, the madmen! as if this moral grandeur were not a hundred times superior to that of the monarchs of this lower world! Do you know, Mr. Lanoue, that this spiritual kingdom which still endures, and which I believe, as has been predicted, will last for ever, is a glorious kingdom! I love this king whose sceptre is a reed. The refusal of the Jews to believe in Jesus Christ is precisely what makes me believe in him. I should not like a monarch who would please them. How much I prefer the heavenly monarch of

the Gospel. But why did God choose a people so wicked as the Jewish nation for his beloved people, to the exclusion of others?

Mr. Lanoue.—Why does the agriculturist choose the vilest materials, and confide to them the precious seed which is to produce the harvests that are to nourish himself and his family? To ask the reason of the choice which God makes of men and things is most presumptuous and inconsistent. Is it for us to say to him, “You shall work with this material, or you shall avoid that?” Besides, the Jewish people were not a people favoured by God to the exclusion of other nations. They were the simple depository of the divine promises; and the obstinacy with which they hand down their religious dogmas, without alteration, from father to son, proves that they were well fitted to receive the deposit of the divine word, and keep it safe amidst the vicissitudes of the world. It appears that such was the only function of the Jewish people. God’s purpose required not the yielding wax, but the stubborn iron; and he made use of that which already existed. Had the Bible been entrusted to the Athenians, it would long since have been buried. The countrymen of Alcibiades and Pericles required high-sounding phrases. The Egyptians would have graven the Holy Scriptures in hieroglyphics of granite; but they would have been to us as if they had never existed.

Mr. Tessier.—In fact, have we any right to demand of God why he makes choice of this people more than another? If this people alone were saved, it would be another affair, but that is not the case; nay, they are condemned, and notwithstanding, they cherish and preserve the very book which condemns them. And why should they not have kept it, when they thought it promised them the empire of the world?

Mr. Lanoue.—I shall anticipate here another objection which you might raise. The error of the Jews relative to the Saviour has been adopted by profane historians. They were the contemporaries of Jesus Christ, and, seduced by earthly greatness, misunderstood the heavenly greatness of the Son of Mary. They have therefore spoken of him only with contempt; and many modern sceptics even jest openly about his obscure birth and the class to which he belonged.

Mr. Tessier.—To please them, I suppose, he ought to have been the son of a duke or a marquis. As the adopted son of a carpenter, he derived no celebrity from the external circumstances of this world, but to me the merit of Jesus is so much the greater on that account. He raised himself alone; he had no need of flatterers. And then, Mr. Lanoue, his lowly origin is a manifest censure on our silly distinctions. The life of Jesus Christ is much more interesting than that of a prince—it is the life of man. You lead me to love the Gospel on the

very grounds which have furnished matter for the jests and criticisms of the proud. In my eyes this is its highest praise; it avenges us for the contempt of the rich and the great.

Mr. Lanoue.—Take care. One might mistake your warmth for that of a man who, from mere hatred of the upper classes, feels flattered to see the master of the world born in an inferior one.

Mr. Tessier.—I fear, Mr. Lanoue, that I was rather too warm. But tell me, nevertheless, suppose there is a single man who has never heard of the Gospel, God has never appeared to him, and this, according to your own confession, would be an injustice?

Mr. Lanoue.—No doubt, if I had told you that this man was condemned on that account. But God will judge him according to the light he has received. For him there is a reform possible in the preparatory world. It is sufficient for the present that God has given to the Gospel the means of spreading itself over all the earth, for us to acknowledge that its end is attained. You tell me that the Gospel has not yet reached such or such a place; but did God say that in a day, in the twinkling of an eye, his Book would penetrate into all the corners of the universe? He has eternity to work in, and, consequently he has patience. We have but a small portion of time, and that is why we are impatient when we do not see things progress rapidly. It is not agreeably to our will, but to the will of God, that things ought to be ordered. Would you say that the author of a good book upon morality loses his time in writing it, because it does not instantly find readers? His book is nevertheless a seed thrown into the ground, which will bear fruit some day or other. The Gospel, in like manner, is a seed confided to the earth, and I venture to believe that the latter will not allow it to perish in its bosom. The Divine Wisdom shows us in this book the means of rendering man better and purer. You cannot doubt it. Wherever it goes, wherever its lessons are practised, it will make men virtuous. Will you now say that it is not a real boon conferred on humanity, because it has not met with the popularity which you wished it to have, or the vain power which you would fain ascribe to it? It is a book whose fate, to make use of a familiar expression, is to be the same as that of all other books; it is to diffuse itself as all material things are diffused—insulted here, received elsewhere, honoured and thrown aside by turns. The caresses or the outrages of the world concern it little, and do not hinder it from being an inestimable present from God himself. Externally, it is vile matter, like all the others; internally, it inclines man to virtue. This is the essential point. A book that enlightens man and makes him better is the best thing in the world for us, however slowly or rapidly it may

circulate in society. We are inclined to wish that its adoption should have something miraculous in it, so as to attest in itself the supreme power. This is a ridiculous pretension. Its real action is in the heart. That is the sphere of God's action.

Mr. Tessier.—That is true. However, when I see that the Bible is not universally diffused, I feel that there is something in this which weakens the idea I had formed of the divine power. I know very well that you will again allege human liberty as the reason; but I should like that you could account otherwise for the slow diffusion of the Divine Word.

Mr. Lanoue.—We, poor insects, swallowed up in the existence of a day, cannot appreciate the gradual march of human progress. God makes himself known to man only by degrees; he waits till the social body arrives at a certain state before he gives it a certain kind of nourishment. Thousands of years had to elapse between the promise and the advent of the Redeemer. An interval of this kind had to take place, no doubt, between the period when he confided his Word to his disciples, and that in which the entire human race shall know and appreciate it. One day, I rejoice to believe, the Bible will be read and known throughout the entire earth. But when? I do not know. We are only perhaps in the infancy of the human race. He who is eternal does not reckon like us. Tell a child that this acorn which you throw into the earth will one day cover an entire field. Impatient to witness the phenomenon, the child goes every day to see it; he finds it slow in germinating, he is impatient and grows angry. At length the oak issues from the earth; the child accompanies its growth with his wishes; but the tree is very soon forgotten, for the child becomes a youth, and the field is still far from being covered. The child becomes a man, grows old, and his children after him, and it is only the great-grandchild of him who witnessed the seed confided to the earth, who beholds the entire space shadowed by the majestic branches of the king of the forest. Twenty centuries, Mr. Tessier, are in the sight of God much less than twenty days of the rapid existence of man.

Mr. Tessier.—In proportion as you destroy each of my strictures, Mr. Lanoue, conviction enters my mind; but immediately afterwards another objection arises. I feel that I annoy you with my doubts; but just now, one of so extraordinary a nature occurs to me, that I shall be silent for ever if you can overthrow it.

Mr. Lanoue.—I am all attention.

Mr. Tessier.—I have read somewhere that the stars which shine above our heads at night are so many suns, like that

which enlightens and warms us during the day. I have read that all these suns, of which it is impossible to estimate the number, are surrounded by globes like our own, which revolve around them and receive from them light and heat. Analogy and good sense tell us that the universe so immense is not a desert; we therefore, with great probability, believe it to be inhabited. There are thus many worlds governed by the same God, for there is but one God. Now if you establish a God for our earth alone, I can no longer agree with you.

Mr. Lanoue.—The universe obeys the same laws, and consequently one and the same God. What do you conclude from that?

Mr. Tessier.—What, Mr. Lanoue? The God who created all these worlds immolated himself for ours alone! This God whom the most audacious imagination contemplates with respect in the midst of the immeasurable grandeur of the universe, was made man for us, and concealed himself for thirty-three years in a corner of Palestine! Oh, that is too much. The God of all these worlds hid himself on our poor little earth, which in proportion to the great universe is but as a grain of sand to the entire mass of the globe!

Mr. Lanoue.—You know that the telescope has measured the height of the mountains in the moon, and discovered seas and continents in other planets?

Mr. Tessier.—A proof that they are inhabited. I know that; and that is what torments me.

Mr. Lanoue.—Do you know also, that the microscope discovers a host of beings in a drop of water, and shows us that these beings have flesh, muscles, organs of volition and movement?

Mr. Tessier.—I know all that; but what have they in common with my suns and their planets?

Mr. Lanoue.—If the telescope has increased the universe in a marvellous manner to our eyes in the firmament, the microscope shows also, on the other side, that there is not a blade of grass which is not peopled with beings innumerable. One of these instruments leads us to look on our earth as a grain of sand, to make use of your comparison; but the other shows us that there is not a single grain of sand that is not in some degree a world.

Mr. Tessier.—Oh, yes! Mr. Lanoue; the universe is very great, but the more you make me admire it, the more I dislike the idea of religion being confined to one small spot in it.

Mr. Lanoue.—Wait for a moment; let me speak to you again of the telescope and the microscope. If the first of these instruments extends the boundaries of the universe, the second proves to you that nothing is neglected in that vast machine; that a blade of grass is as admirable as a sun.

Mr. Tessier.—Very true; what wisdom, what sublime art in all this!

Mr. Lanoue.—It matters not how far the divine power extends itself; it is not the less present. It is in all its works, even the smallest. Although world should be added to world, nothing is without its use, nothing escapes the attentive care of the supreme master; he dwells in every animalcule as completely as in a world.

Mr. Tessier.—Oh, yes, Mr Lanoue. He does not act like weak and finite man, who is obliged to neglect what is beside him when his attention is directed elsewhere—who always loses on one side what he gains on the other. God takes care of everything with the same solicitude; his providence watches over all his works.

Mr. Lanoue.—Over all, you should continue, except man—except his master-piece, at least among all his works in this lower world. He has peopled all the skies; he has peopled, likewise, every grain of dust which man treads under his feet; but man, who is placed in the centre of these two infinite regions, is alone neglected—nay more, even forgotten!

Mr. Tessier.—Ah, Mr. Lanoue, how you lead me to confess the contrary of what I just now maintained! I can now see that, in spite of the boundless extent of the universe, man has never ceased to be the object of his Creator's care. I see that the Divine Majesty cannot cease to care for man, since he condescends to watch over the very smallest animals.

Mr. Lanoue.—Well, if the human race, which is thus cared for by God like everything else, has become estranged from him, do you think it would be unworthy of God to re-establish him in his former position. If man is sick, do you think he will not find a physician? If he has fallen into darkness of heart and spirit, do you believe it beneath the Divine Goodness to send him his Wisdom to guide and enlighten him? You say it is unworthy of God to unite himself to man, so miserable and so contemptible. I ask you, in my turn, if it be unworthy of God to raise man from his misery, in order to render him less despicable.

Mr. Tessier.—It would be folly—nay more, it would be blasphemy, Mr. Lanoue, to deny it.

Mr. Lanoue.—Is this God—I will not say hiding, for I see you are ashamed of the expression—but descending on earth, so incongruous after all with that God whom the telescope and the microscope reveal to us? The one God is great and magnificent as power itself, the other is mild and merciful as love! Because his Wisdom shone in the hearts of mortals, do you believe that his Providence was absent from the rest of creation? Is God limited to a place? Is he circumscribed by time? You are told that God is everywhere—in the stars

as in the lowliest blade of grass. Well, because erring mortals were enlightened in the rays of his Truth, did his truth on that account cease to be present in every part of his works?

Mr. Tessier.—Man, who had estranged himself from God, required to have this God once more presented to his heart, in order that Providence might be justified. That no longer embarrasses me. The wisdom and the love of the Most High shine with all their splendour throughout the entire universe; if they suffer an eclipse in man, it is only in accordance with the divine goodness that they return and manifest themselves in him. The fact of the redemption is beyond all objection. It is not because man is great or little that he merits the divine attention; it is because he has placed himself for a moment beyond the law which governs everything. The moral law returns to direct the moral being, as the universal law of gravity always tends to re-assert its power over any body which has temporarily freed itself from its influence. This is so admirable that we must be blind to refuse our assent to such principles,

Mr. Lanoue.—And to carry out your comparison, I say that if it is a physical impossibility for a material atom to withdraw itself from the action of universal gravitation, the privilege granted to man of freeing himself from the divine influence is his proudest title and the most signal stamp of his intellectual superiority. It is his free will which removes him from God, and it was in order to leave intact this noble privilege of the creature that the Creator was obliged to descend into a body similar to his own, interrupting in his own case alone the law of transmission by which the human race, defiled in its source, remained the same throughout succeeding generations.

Mr. Tessier.—Ah, Mr. Lanoue, what have you just said? I had yielded—yielded completely. Satisfied with the outline of your theory, I had not descended to the details. But there is one circumstance which interposes a veil between my heart and the truths which you have taught me. What! did God make himself man without the aid of another man? Did he become flesh though flesh did not give him birth? Did a virgin, in short, carry him in her womb? Oh! I cannot bring myself to believe this!

Mr. Lanoue.—You take a great deal of trouble, as if it depended on you to prescribe to the world the laws which it must obey. Do you know how the grain is produced in the fields?

Mr. Tessier.—Certainly; I see the seed sown.

Mr. Lanoue.—But this material seed is not the life of the plant; something which you do not perceive descends into

this seed to make it produce the stem, and this again will have seed, which, in its turn, will produce other stems.

Mr. Tessier.—To be sure—that is a quality of the seed.

Mr. Lanoue.—A quality! a property, is it not?

Mr. Tessier.—They mean the same thing.

Mr. Lanoue.—Well; that which renders the seed fit for growing is something which is added to it. It is a property which it has acquired; it is not the seed which gave itself that property—it receives it, that is all. It germinates, swells, and grows, not by its own will, for it has none, but because it is disposed so as to receive the universal life which circulates in this vast universe. It is a receptacle of life, not an agent.

Mr. Tessier.—But who denies that?

Mr. Lanoue.—Is not the life which is added to the grain of wheat, and which it did not give itself, given to all other germs? Is it not like a universal soul which dwells in them, and without which they are only dead matter? What you sow is simply matter; God alone gives it life.

Mr. Tessier.—It is beyond dispute.

Mr. Lanoue.—Since every seed in the animal kingdom, as in the vegetable, derives its life from the universal soul, it is clear that this soul can descend into all the parts of matter, provided that the latter are disposed so as to receive it.

Mr. Tessier.—That is true also.

Mr. Lanoue.—Cannot God therefore dispose matter so as to receive life?

Mr. Tessier.—God can do so, I grant.

Mr. Lanoue.—Well; could he not dispose a certain portion of matter so as to receive the life emanating from himself? Why would you say that a germ prepared in this manner was necessary, since this germ is not life, but only the receptacle of life? It is the life which is wanting here; it is not the form—that will come afterwards. The form is only necessary as an envelope. Life in its origin is independent of the moulds into which it is cast: it is everywhere for the enlightened intellect, although it is only presented to our experimental observation under certain forms. The Scriptures say, "The spirit bloweth where it listeth;" now suppose that the spirit is God himself, can he not make life appear when he pleases?

Mr. Tessier.—I have heard of spontaneous generation among certain animals which live in liquors; but I did not know that the same thing extended to man.

Mr. Lanoue.—The propagation of the human species is, no doubt, obedient to certain laws which hinder man from abusing it; but the life which one mortal gives to another is not produced by him. He receives it without being able to account

for it, and he communicates it without knowing it the better for that. To say that Jesus Christ had no mortal father, is merely to say that he had no need of the first earthly and visible envelope which life usually presents to our observation.

Mr. Tessier.—But to account for an effect which is produced without the ordinary laws, we must have recourse to a miracle.

Mr. Lanoue.—Is it more difficult for life to manifest itself under a strange envelope than under that with which we are acquainted? In a word, if you cannot explain the primitive creation of man without divine intervention, why should you be surprised to find this divine intervention exercised in a peculiar case? You say that everything proceeds according to the law of order, but this order was deranged; and in order to produce a Redeemer not vitiated according to these laws, it was necessary that he should be pure, so that a deranged order might yield to a rectifying power. This power created all things at first by descending into germs which our philosophy do not assign to it. Well, who will venture to say that it cannot now descend into any but vitiated forms? It was necessary, you admitted yourself, to introduce into a vitiated race a pure germ. Endeavour, with all the powers of your mind, to find any other means than this. For the germ was no longer in the human race; it could only be found in God alone. God subjects himself, no doubt, to his own laws; he never deranges them for fear of compromising our liberty; but what has our liberty to do here? Are we the directors of life? Do we say to it, "Thou art to take place in this manner, and not in this other?" Poor ignorant creatures that we are, we do not know how our will moves our arm, and we wish to penetrate the mysterious sanctuary of life itself, and say to the Creator, "You shall act in the way which we prescribe to you." We cannot make a single hair upon our head black or white, and we wish proudly to decide that the Supreme Intellect, in his manifestation, shall take such or such a material form, and not that which his power judges the only befitting one! If we think this a miracle, observe that it is simply on account of our ignorance of things. It is not a miracle which overturns the universal law; it is merely a divine action which produces life in a manner that our short-sightedness cannot comprehend. One would think from our pretensions that our limited view could explain everything. Can it explain why the oak takes a hundred years to grow, while the mushroom springs up full-formed in a single night? Does it know why there are monsters in creation? It does not know by what phenomenon a defective organization is produced, and it ventures to assert that it is

impossible that organization can be restored to purity! We see the forms of life, but of life itself we know neither the essence nor the laws. We are unwilling to suppose that it can be produced by any other means than those which our systems explain; but these systems are too often astray to claim the right of always guiding us. To call God to account for his exceptions, we ought to know all his laws; and do we know them?

Mr. Tessier.—I acknowledge that everything is possible with God; I acknowledge also that another law of generation was urgently required, and that he who has established all laws may follow some which appear new to us, blind creatures that we are. I acknowledge that evil was hereditary, and that a departure from the ordinary transmission of the laws of life was necessary to remedy it. That is not, as you very properly say, a miracle which affects our moral liberty; it only transcends our intellect. But you have accustomed me to explanations so clear and incontestable, that any mystery at present alarms me. This mystery, however, I receive; for one must be mad to say that God cannot inspire life wherever he pleases, and in whatever manner he pleases. But, after all, I must always insist that everything which is born here below is born of a germ similar to itself; there is not a grain of wheat in existence which was not produced from a similar grain; and, in the same way, every man must spring from another man.

Mr. Lanoue.—In reply, I shall merely repeat this passage from the Gospel—"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; that which is born of the spirit is spirit." The body of Jesus Christ was formed of the body of a woman, like all bodies; his spirit descended from the divine essence, from the creative soul, like all souls. Every man owes his material body to his mother, while he derives his inclinations and moral tendencies more especially from his father; the proverb itself says, "Like father, like son." The accidents of life appear to contradict this proverb sometimes; but these accidental deviations from order are exceptions to a general rule which they confirm instead of destroying.

Mr. Tessier.—Wait a little; the miracle then comes almost to this, that Jesus Christ derived his soul from God! I see no great difficulty there; the production of our bodies has nothing to do with the transmission of souls.

Mr. Lanoue.—God placed in corporeal matter which was destined to receive life in the womb of a virgin, divine inclinations, because, according to the laws of generation, a man could only transmit impure tendencies. In a word, the material germ, which we believe necessary to life, is itself only an envelope. The question is to know if mental

or spiritual life can exist without this envelope. It cannot among organized beings, because generation would be thus placed under their command ; but it can with God, who is the principle of all generation.

Mr. Tessier.—This is the conclusion, then : The generation became divine the moment that a pure woman was so modified as to receive the action from above ; everything took place afterwards according to the laws of nature. The body, with the qualities which were attached to it, received its material increase from matter, like all others ; the first impulse alone, which was the cause of its growth, was given by God. The soul obeyed in its principle the laws of the soul, and the body followed in its development the laws of ordinary life. With a different soul from ours, God had a body similar to our own, and like it subject to temptation.

Mr. Lanoue.—Absolutely ; and by his temptations and his combats on the earth, he rendered his human nature, or body, divine like his soul. That is why he alone was raised with his earthly body as well as with his spiritual body.

Mr. Tessier.—Ah, Mr. Lanoue, what a terrible mystery is this ! I was beginning to perceive a glimmering of light respecting the birth of Jesus Christ ; but the resurrection plunges me back again into the most frightful darkness. With all your learning, you can never make that clear to me.

Mr. Lanoue.—Do you know thoroughly the nature of all the substances which exist upon the earth ? You say that such a thing has this property—that such another thing has another property. Cannot a body which was born without the assistance of the laws of generation, take such a development that it shall become at the end of this operation a body entirely different from those subject to the ordinary law ?

Mr. Tessier.—It may develop itself in spirit ; that is quite simple. It must naturally arrive at a moral result. But a physical result like this ?

Mr. Lanoue.—That which brings about physical results is always the first law. But this point of departure once changed, all the results are changed. The fruit produced by the grafted tree ceases to resemble that produced by the wild one. Jesus Christ was the fruit of immortality, and must therefore be immortal in everything. What you call the *substance* cannot prevent this, for the substance is always conformable to the germ. A germ of death produces death ; an immortal seed produces an immortal tree.

Mr. Tessier.—It appears to me that you are about to fall here into one of the errors of the Gnostics, a sect of whom I have read, who pretend that Jesus Christ, as to his body, was a sort of exceptional or immaterial being, like those substantial bodies which take an appearance and form, and which are perceptible

to the senses of visionaries. If that were true, the life of Jesus Christ must have passed on a stage where all the world saw in him, by a species of double sight, a sort of model of the spiritual world. That is not a bad idea, although savouring of heresy. The difficulty is much lessened by it.

Mr. Lanoue.—The idea which you have expressed is the opinion of system-mongers, which I do not adopt. I do not say that Jesus Christ's visible body was spirit and not flesh. I only say that he was, during his life, of a substance the nature of which our senses, which can only judge in five manners, were not capable of discerning. All flesh, says St. Paul, in the passage which we have already quoted, is not similar. The body of God, born without the aid of man, may be of one kind; that of mortal man of another. In a word, reason cannot give us a clear notion of a being who developed in his existence the qualities of a germ beyond the reach of reason. Our senses have no means of judging, when the action has arrived at its termination, what they could not seize when the action was at its origin. The Messiah did not dazzle the eyes of those who witnessed his life; he manifested himself to them such as he was. When he arrived at that point where the organs of men ceased to be of the same character as his own, they ceased to see him. His body was not carried away by stealth; he simply passed from the natural state in which we are, to the spiritual state which escapes our senses. The natural was not his element. Born of heaven, he was only to pass through the world and return thither; and since there are in heaven, as you know, substantial bodies in the perfect human form, I conclude that the Messiah passed from death to life, as all the world does. If it be said that his flesh was flesh like ours, and destined to corruption, I deny it with all my strength. No person during his lifetime proved it; no person after his death subjected it to chemical analysis. It is the more necessary to attend to the observation of St. Paul, that Jesus Christ himself says to his apostles, after his resurrection, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have." He was out of the dominion of time and space, since he entered the chamber where his disciples were while the doors were closed. Still he was not of the immaterial substance of spirits. His nature was the divine nature; and it was therefore neither material like our bodies nor spiritual like our souls.

Mr. Tessier.—There are diversities of substance without doubt, as there are differences in material combinations. To take a familiar example among the bodies with which we most frequently come in contact: a fisherman who had seen and handled all his life nothing but turbot and soles, would have no idea of the electrical shock caused by the torpedo. Nevertheless, the material flesh of both is quite similar. It is quite

certain that the sensation caused by the touch of the body assumed by the Redeemer, might in no wise resemble the sensations which we receive from other bodies; and yet we could not infer anything from that, except that we do not know what the nature of that body was. In this, human reason must perfectly acquiesce. I am very glad you made this observation; for the passage which you quoted had led me to think, that as a spirit has neither flesh nor blood, it could not have the human form. I now see that the spiritual organs composing such a being could not make the same impression on the sensations of a visionary as the impression received by those who touched the body of Jesus Christ.

Mr. Lanoue.—Thus we ought to believe in the fact until we have thoroughly ascertained the nature of the sensations imparted by all sorts of bodies, even by that of God himself.

Mr. Tessier.—Oh, in that case you may believe without running the least risk of being contradicted!

Mr. Lanoue.—In fact, those who denied the resurrection of Jesus never thought of discovering the fraud of the Christians by having a search made for the body, which, if it had been material like our own, could not have been taken away so secretly, nor annihilated so completely, that no trace of it would remain. All our theologians rely upon material proofs of the fact of the resurrection, to prove the truth of the Christian redemption. There is a book upon this subject written by a divine called Sherlock.

Mr. Tessier.—Even although I had not the least objection to what you have just stated, conviction of its truth would not necessarily follow, because I wish for a theory. I adopt the one which you offer to me this far, that I acknowledge the insufficiency of human reason to appreciate what the nature of Christ originally was, and what modifications it afterwards underwent. Even physical science shows us bodies which pass from the visible to the invisible. I do not mean to say that our Saviour passed away in this manner; I will not affirm that his body was an elastic gas; but, in fact, if our means of observation are imperfect even in what depends upon our senses, with still greater reason are they so when the thing in question is beyond the province of the senses. Thus, Jesus gradually laid aside the nature which he received from his mother. It was, no doubt, after this operation was completed that he said, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" On any other hypothesis than yours, such words in the mouth of a son are inexplicable.

Mr. Lanoue.—Just so. If gifted with other organs, we should, no doubt, be able to explain many enigmas which our senses can never decipher. This fact is a miracle only to our ignorance. For him who is acquainted with the two

worlds it is not a miracle, but merely the effect of a spiritual law.

Mr. Tessier.—But I should be unwilling, notwithstanding, to go so far about in order to explain the other so-called miracles of the Bible. Our Saviour belonged to the spiritual world by birth, and returned to it at his death. That was very natural for him; but with regard to all the miracles which he performed upon others, are we to conclude that he transported these with him into the spiritual world? That would be a little too much. How are we to reconcile it with probability? How can we perceive the spiritual in the material otherwise than in the person of Jesus?

Mr. Lanoue.—I shall come presently to this sort of miracles. In the mean time I merely request your attention to the one before us. If you agree with me that the human form, which is the type of all known forms, is also that of the generating principle of these forms; if you acknowledge that in the superior degree, or the world of causes, this form exists, although it is not manifested; you see in the appearance of Jesus on earth the original Principle of Being manifesting itself for a moment and then returning to its primitive essence. If our Saviour disappears from our eyes, he does not disappear from those who inhabit the superior degree; he has only re-ascended to his sphere; he has not placed himself in contradiction with his essence, or with the Sum of created things. One-half of the universe may have seen him disappear; but to the other half he was still present. It is thus that the sun, the noblest image of its Creator, never sets for one place without at the same time rising to shed his light on another. Man, who is bounded by a horizon, says that a star has disappeared; but the star remains fixed. The Creator manifested himself in the lowest degree of his works, and then returned to the highest. This is the Incarnation and the Resurrection. It is not our province to judge of these operations of two degrees, as we have only senses which are capable of judging those of one. God thus entered into and departed from life without ceasing to be the same. He appeared as God in the lowest substances, as he is God in the highest substances, of Nature, in order that he might be completely what the name of Jehovah expresses, "I am he that is," that he might accomplish what he says of himself—"I am the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End."

Mr. Tessier.—I perceive in all this a gleam of sublime light shining forth from the midst of impenetrable darkness. It is enough for me to say that man has separated himself from God. God cannot communicate himself anew to man without assuming a person. A cause can only become sensible when it becomes an effect. This being granted, if the Creator has

appeared on our globe, as I admit in justice he ought to have done, point me out another personage than Jesus who could have performed this part.

Mr. Lanoue.—And if so, let any one give us another or truer history of his existence and spiritual actions than that contained in the Gospel. In assuming this position, without seeking to penetrate into mysteries, we shall run no risk of being refuted.

Mr. Tessier.—Nevertheless, I should like to know something of the other miracles of the Gospel. I read in Rousseau that, if the miracles of the Gospel were suppressed, all the earth would throw itself at the feet of Jesus Christ. To carry out this idea, I procured the Gospel altered and arranged by Touquet, but as often as I opened it I felt a sort of remorse. I said to myself that we ought not to mutilate the Sacred Book. I recalled to my mind that St. John, in the Apocalypse, says that “if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life.” On the other hand, again, I have a strong wish to comprehend the miracles. What, then, am I to do? I reckoned not a little on you to clear up this; but your grand law of order, to which the Supreme Being himself submits, has rendered me so difficult of belief that I do not think you will ever be able to bring the miracles into harmony with it.

Mr. Lanoue.—Do you know the law of order completely, Mr. Tessier?

Mr. Tessier.—I make no pretension to do so.

Mr. Lanoue.—If there be a law of order to which all material bodies in nature are subject, and the working of which our senses are capable of comprehending, there is also an order on which the phenomena of intellect depends, and it is no puny intellect which can undertake to explain these laws. An observer therefore may be puzzled by certain moral phenomena, and yet not be at all capable of appreciating and recognising the laws on which they depend.

Mr. Tessier.—That is all very true. Without going so far as you, I can understand perfectly well the laws by which I make my pot boil, but I do not know those by means of which the electric machine gives a shock to every individual forming a link of the chain. This effect, although natural, might well pass for a miracle in the eyes of him who was not acquainted with the laws of electricity. There are people who say that the actions of our Saviour proved only a more perfect knowledge of science than accorded with the limited notions of the coarse and uncivilized men of those days. Imagine, they say, an astronomer who, being able from his science to predict the height of a certain tide ten years before it happened, should say to the sea on that day, “Thus far shalt thou go and no

farther." Those who were present, seeing him obeyed by the elements, would, no doubt, declare that he had performed a miracle. But that is no argument against your spiritual laws.

Mr. Lanoue.—In fact, it is not the same thing at all. You cannot, with all your knowledge of natural philosophy, explain the actions of Jesus with regard to the sick who were presented to him; you have nothing which can account, in any degree, for the extraordinary spectacles presented to the eyes of the apostles. We must therefore have recourse to our theory.

Mr. Tessier.—I am very curious to know how you will explain to me the manner in which a spiritual law can act on the sensible world without deranging its laws. It seems to me there must be a conflict between them. Two laws, and only one operator. That is difficult to comprehend.

Mr. Lanoue.—It is a little deep; but you have already read so much—you have so completely formed the habit of meditation and thought, that I am persuaded beforehand you will understand me if you only grant me your undivided attention. But we shall rest here for the present, if you please. The evening is now advanced; we should not have time now to treat this question of miracles as fully as it demands.

So saying, Mr. Lanoue left the notary to his reflections. The latter seeing the philosopher begin to arrange some loose papers on the table, saluted him respectfully, and retired, without saying a word.

TENTH CONVERSATION.

THE THEORY OF MIRACLES.

THE question of the miracles performed by our Saviour interested Mr. Tessier so deeply, that he was extremely anxious to renew the conversation of the evening before, which had been too soon interrupted. "We have now come to the miracles," said he, when they again met, "and something within me whispers that you are about to clear up these puzzling matters, and render them as plain and intelligible as those which you have already demonstrated."

Mr. Lanoue.—Beginning with those miracles of our Saviour which consist in the healing of diseases, I ascribe them all to the effects of spiritual medicine, which was well known to the ancients. You have read that there have often existed privileged persons, who could banish the diseases of their fellow-men by the imposition of their hands. The man who does this is certainly endowed with superior powers, but not such as can with justice be called supernatural. This power does not

belong to that material nature with which we are acquainted, but to that spiritual nature which has special laws of its own, accessible to reason, although unknown to the majority of men. Jesus, in touching those who approached him, only produced effects resulting from this spiritual medicine. His own will, and the faith of the sick in him, operated the cures.

Mr. Tessier.—Then the effect was similar to that produced by the kings of France who cured of the king's evil. Many simple people perhaps were really cured by their own confidence. We have many examples of this kind of medicine. The influence of one individual exercises a moral effect upon another. The persuasion that he will possibly be cured puts the sick man in a position to be acted on with effect, and then his cure is his own work. How many people go to watering-places with the idea of being the better for it, and these waters, which have very frequently no more virtue than that of my own well, set them upon their legs again admirably.

Mr. Lanoue.—These examples, and a host of others, prove to you the very great influence which the moral nature of man exercises on his physical nature. It is in part to this false idea that we must attribute the good which people often derive from their pilgrimage to such or such a place.

Mr. Tessier.—But is not this imagination?

Mr. Lanoue.—Change the signification of this word in your dictionary. Imagination is not with us the sight of that which does not exist, but rather of that which exists for the thought. That is real existence. Matter is merely an envelope. Thought, when well regulated, is a carefully planned excursion into the spiritual world, while imagination is a sort of aimless ramble into the same sphere. A poet does not invent, Mr. Tessier; he creates, in all the force of the word. What he perceives by his moral faculties is something which really exists. A man impressed by his imagination is a man acted upon by a real force.

Mr. Tessier.—But, after all, the imagination is sometimes extremely imaginary.

Mr. Lanoue.—After some additional explanations, you will, I think, comprehend me. But for the present, let us return to our subject. There are some people who die, there are others who are cured, by the mere effects of mental emotions. It is plainly proved, therefore, that man exercises a prodigious influence on his fellow-man.

Mr. Tessier.—For that matter, without going so far, I have a relative who, when she is ill, calls in a physician in whom she has great confidence. The physician no sooner enters her chamber than she feels herself better; the words of her doctor console her, fortify her, and cure her, before he has had time to apply the medicines, which are in general only

very insignificant matters. I believe that even without the medicines she would recover, so great is her confidence.

Mr. Lanoue.—The physician of whom you speak, Mr. Tessier, only makes use of that power which exists in every being, and which we have not yet learned to turn sufficiently to account. Blinded as we are by material nature, we identify ourselves with it, till at last we come to persuade ourselves that we are pure machines, which can only be influenced by things analogous to matter. This is a great error. We do not always require material agents before we can act upon man.

Mr. Tessier.—That is beyond dispute. Since this force of which we are speaking belongs even to the animals, it ought, for the same reason, to be found in man. Do we not see the serpent fascinate smaller reptiles, and oblige them to throw themselves into its jaws? The sparrow-hawk, before he alights upon his prey, arrests it at his will; and I fancy, too, that the pointer which stops motionless before the partridge exercises upon it a sort of charm which keeps it fixed to the spot.

Mr. Lanoue.—This force exists everywhere in nature. Every being is endowed with it; but recollect what I told you, that the mere seed confided to the earth does not draw its life from itself; it receives it from the spiritual world, which is the source of all life. It is from this source, also, that organized beings derive the force with which they act upon each other. They are all simple receptacles. The more they dispose themselves to receive, the more they do receive; the more they doubt of their power, the more they withdraw themselves from this universal influence. They then exercise no influence, because they really receive no force. They who have no *faith in themselves* are as weak as the man who, believing himself incapable of lifting a burden, makes no effort to do so. Incredulity, then, even in physical matters, hinders us from doing what is quite possible for us; will it not, therefore, for the same reason, exercise an influence upon others? Those who distrust the influence of any one upon them withdraw themselves by this doubt from his power. They oppose by their doubts a *vis inertiae*, which paralyses, in some degree, the influence exercised upon them. In these two cases, spiritual medicine produces no effect. Suppose, on the contrary, two persons, one of whom is perfectly convinced of the power which he exercises and the other perfectly disposed to receive this influence; there is no doubt that between a physician and a patient of this kind certain cures will take place, without any need of physical remedies.

Mr. Tessier.—I do not doubt it at all: and I can perfectly conceive that the unlimited confidence with which Jesus inspired his hearers, and the peculiar energy which he derived

from the spiritual world which was at his disposal, would have enabled him to cure any one whatever.

Mr. Lanoue.—Not any one whatever ; and it is that which proves beyond a doubt that these cures belong to the domain of spiritual medicine, and were not what is usually understood by miracles. You remember that in certain districts he could do nothing, on account of the incredulity of those present, and you can now understand why. He who does not believe actually resists with his doubts and his denials ; he withdraws himself from the spiritual influence, and nothing produces any effect upon him. A force which would affect him in spite of himself, would not belong to that order of things in which the Divine Wisdom is manifested. In everything the concurrence of two wills is necessary. This concurrence is necessary in a moral point of view to bring about persuasion ; it is equally necessary in a physical point of view, before man can place himself at the disposal of his fellow-man. Force is the interruption of every law, and could not be employed by Him who has created all laws.

Mr. Tessier.—Oh, Mr. Lanoue, that is admirable ! I see now why Jesus insisted on faith, even in things with which faith has apparently no connexion. That is why he said to his disciples, “If ye had faith, even as a grain of mustard seed, ye could say to this mountain, Be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea, and it would be done.”

Mr. Lanoue.—This is a figure which expresses the degree of force which may be acquired by a man who believes in his own power. But to return to the subject. Do you not see that the actions of our Saviour were not, properly speaking, miracles ? For when he had healed the blind man, the latter did not recover his sight instantly, but by a gradual process. Do you not see there the regular gradations by which the faith of the sick man united itself with the faith of the physician, in order to produce an action of the one on the other ?

Mr. Tessier.—I see that as clear as day. Jesus only did, in a higher degree, what is done every day by the physician whom I mentioned, who often cures his patient without bleeding or quinine. But then, Mr. Lanoue, if the good as well as the wicked, if the impious as well as the devout, are endowed with this power, what does it prove in favour of our Saviour ? I recollect having read in the Bible that when Moses performed miracles before King Pharaoh, the magicians of Egypt performed others in their turn. If there be false miracles, as there are true ones, what do the latter prove ?

Mr. Lanoue.—Your objection, Mr. Tessier, requires a more detailed explanation. Tell me, whence comes the power exercised by the spiritual physician ? Do you recollect ?

Mr. Tessier.—You told me that it comes from the spiritual

world; and in fact, I can understand very well that if there be another world, the cause and origin of ours, it is to it we must look for the source of the effects which we witness on earth.

Mr. Lanoue.—The influence of the spiritual world, which you acknowledge, may be pure or impure, true or false.

Mr. Tessier.—How? Is not everything which comes from above, the truth itself?

Mr. Lanoue.—That which comes from above, comes also from below, for there is neither above nor below in the spiritual world. The influence from what you call above, is that of God—it is good; the influence from what you call below, is that of the devil, and is bad. Has not the Church in all ages taught you that if there be a divine influence on earth, there is also a diabolical one?

Mr. Tessier.—Yes; but that is one of those tenets which I permitted myself to call in question; and I never imagined you could prove its truth.

Mr. Lanoue.—I beg your pardon; if there be good there must also be evil. The one is God, the other is what people call the Devil. Everything good, then, which enters into our thoughts or our affections comes from God; and every evil which tempts us to put ourselves in the place of God is derived from the common source of all evil. If good resolutions are suggested to us by God, evil ones are prompted by the devil. You must recognise this opposing action in your temptations, and you will recollect we spoke of it when treating of physical evil.

Mr. Tessier.—I do perfectly.

Mr. Lanoue.—True doctrines, therefore, proceed from God, and false ones from the principle of all error. To prove that his doctrine was true, Jesus was obliged to perform spiritual actions which bore witness of its immaterial origin. These actions, or rather miracles, to employ the common expression, prove his doctrine, as his doctrine, in its turn, proves the miracles.

Mr. Tessier.—But, bless me! this is reasoning in a circle. Rousseau has already remarked that.

Mr. Lanoue.—Not at all; follow me attentively. The moral doctrines of Jesus Christ might appear probable to those who heard them, but there was nothing to prove that they were true, unless he who promulgated them could give unequivocal evidence of spiritual action. People wished to see in him not only a learned doctor, but a messenger from the other world, so to speak. You object that the wicked man derives his power from the same source. Beyond a doubt; but if the wicked man proves his power, he does not prove his doctrine. After having proved by his actions that he appertained

to the immaterial world, Jesus proved by his words that he came from the pure portion of that world. To decide between a true and a false prophet, both of whom give proofs of immaterial power, it is absolutely necessary, therefore, to have recourse to their doctrine. When I am fully persuaded of the truth of the words of a reformer who makes pretensions to be an agent between God and me, I wish to satisfy myself, likewise, of the nature of his power. To judge between two doctrines, on the contrary, we have no need of spiritual actions to enable us to come to a decision, since our reason alone is the umpire. If the devil enunciates a doctrine, the least enlightened man in the world will perceive its perversity, and in that case, miracles only terrify instead of convincing us. If he said to us, "Do evil," conscience would reply, "Begone, thou art an impostor!" If, on the contrary, man is persuaded by moral evidence, and yet fears that the legislator is only acting upon his own authority, he demands from him the proofs of his mission, and after having seen his spiritual actions, he prostrates himself at his feet. You see, then, that it was absolutely necessary our Saviour should prove that his words were of immaterial origin, while his actions required in their turn the testimony of his words before they could be believed.

Mr. Tessier.—That is conclusive. Oh, Mr. Lanoue, how this theory of miracles pleases me! I recollect that Rousseau demands that our Saviour should have overturned heaven and earth, in order to prove his divinity. It satisfies me much better to see him act upon man in a manner so conformable to reason. I believe firmly in the life of Jesus, as you have explained it; I could not believe in it at all if it were mixed up with revolutions in Nature. I should fancy myself the sport of some phantasmagoria, unworthy of the divine wisdom. Oh, what a sublime character this gives to the acts of the Saviour! The Gospel is thus the twofold history of the moral and material man. It is truly admirable!

Mr. Lanoue.—It is precisely this which proves that the life of Jesus could not have been invented. Such a life and such a theory are too far above the ordinary conceptions of the Gospel historians.

Mr. Tessier.—Very true. How can you imagine that ignorant Jews should not only have invented the sublime morality of the Saviour, but even discovered this admirable spiritual action of which we have been speaking? At that time, it was so little suspected, that the stupid Pharisees expressly demanded miracles from heaven as a proof of his mission. Oh, how much better has he served us! The Physician of the soul, it is only upon our souls that his power is exercised! I question whether St. Matthew, before his conversion, could even have

comprehended what you have just explained. How then should he have been capable of inventing it? I see now why Jesus said that his words were spirit and life; there is life in the action of him who heals in this manner. His disciples said he spoke with *authority*, and not as the Scribes. How is it possible to express spiritual power more clearly?

Mr. Lanoue.—You have read the Bible very diligently, Mr. Tessier—have you not?

Mr. Tessier.—Unfortunately, too diligently; because, understanding nothing of it, my studies only increased my doubts. Oh, Mr. Lanoue, you have made me to-day the happiest man in the world! I have no more doubt or uncertainty. I am much more inclined to pray now than when you recommended me expressly to do so.

Mr. Lanoue.—Yes; but your doubts will return. Are they all cleared up?

Mr. Tessier.—In fact, the light that you offer me is so dazzling that I see nothing else likely to embarrass me.

Mr. Lanoue.—But if you find the spiritual cures of Jesus Christ more comprehensible, you will probably explain by this means his appearing to his disciples after his death. But here it is not his peculiar power which is in question; it is the manner in which the Apostles saw; and all the Bible is filled with visions of this nature.

Mr. Tessier.—In fact, you have given me a theory which explains those extraordinary spectacles, and also the visions of the prophets.

Mr. Lanoue.—It is this vision which Jesus developed in certain persons, and which enabled them to see things that the material vision does not perceive. Spiritual medicine is not limited in its powers to alleviating or banishing the ills of the body; it has also the power of opening the vision of the spirit, just as it happens when we produce a sort of ecstatic or clairvoyant state in certain persons.

Mr. Tessier.—But that is magnetism, and in our day magnetism is so cried down!

Mr. Lanoue.—Names in no way change the fact. Whatever you choose to call it, it always comes to this, that there is, as in the case of natural fascination, an action of one will upon another. It is evident that the human will has a power which we too often disdain to inquire into. Observe how the force of affection increases the strength of the human body! Our will acts upon life—we cannot doubt it. The limits of its action is the only point not perfectly ascertained. But are we to infer from this that the phenomenon does not exist? That would be just as absurd in philosophy as it would be contrary to all the teachings of science. The nervous system, when modified in certain individuals by the imposition of hands,

produces in them an extatic condition which appears to be a mode of perception of a very remarkable nature. It is, no doubt, the original sense of man which transported him beyond the limits of time and space, and made him a denizen of the region of intellect. This state was frequently developed in the followers of Jesus. Thence the wonderful spectacles which they saw, and which bear no analogy to the facts of our material nature. The prophets were formerly named *seers*, and this supposes that a sort of vision different from ours was unhesitatingly attributed to them.

Mr. Tessier.—That is easy to be conceived. Thus the cures performed by our Saviour and his transfiguration are facts of a spiritual order which I admit without difficulty. As regards the other acts of Christ which appear to exceed the laws of nature, I am satisfied with the explanations given by the ordinary commentators.

Mr. Lanoue.—Observe, besides, that the Apostles often write as if they were eye-witnesses of facts which they describe, and yet they could not in the ordinary way have seen the majority of these facts occur. Thus, St. Matthew describes the temptation of our Saviour, which took place in the desert when he was alone.

Mr. Tessier.—Stop there, Mr. Lanoue. Jesus never produced any effect, nor exhibited anything to those who approached him, which was not very probable. But why was he, the absolute master of the other world, himself influenced by these laws? I admit that I do not like this account of his temptation; and if you are able to explain this to me, there will be no bounds to my gratitude.

Mr. Lanoue.—You have often said the same thing, and yet after one mystery was cleared up, another always arose in your mind. There is a profound remark at the conclusion of the Gospel of St. John, that all the books in the world would not contain the actions and words of Jesus Christ. You see, in fact, that if you wished to know everything, there would be no possibility of ever having done.

Mr. Tessier.—Well, this will be for the last time.

Mr. Lanoue.—Jesus was tempted by the Devil—that is to say, evil approached him as it approaches every one in the condition of man, and the Redeemer repulsed the evil, as regenerated men do at the present day.

Mr. Tessier.—That is very good on the whole; but I like, as you know, to go to the bottom of things. Is the Devil then an individual? What sort of a being can that be whose existence is spent in tormenting others, and that too for all eternity?

Mr. Lanoue.—As I have often told you, he has a body in our thought, like every moral sentiment. Evil has its ex-

pression, or if you choose, its emblem, in the spiritual world; that is the whole matter. In this world our corporeal eyes are unable to see it.

Mr. Tessier.—Very good. Then the scene of our Saviour's temptation took place in the spiritual world?

M. Lanoue.—There is not the least doubt of it.

Mr. Tessier.—At present I breathe a little more freely, Mr. Lanoue. But tell me, then, if the devil be a spiritual being, what is his origin? Was he born at the same time with God, or after him? Does he contend with him, as we are told by the Mani—I really forget the word——

Mr. Lanoue.—The Manichæans——

Mr. Tessier.—Yes, that is the name.

Mr. Lanoue.—The Manichæans suppose the existence of two eternal principles, the one of good, the other of evil—God and the Devil. It is from their strife, they think, that all the phenomena which we perceive result. Enlightened Christians merely say that the devil, or evil, originated in man when the latter fell into sin. The moment he passed under the yoke of selfishness, evil began, and has been perpetuated ever since amongst his successors. This evil is a secondary fact in the creation. It is a negation of good and nothing else.

Mr. Tessier.—That is very well as to the evil existing in man upon the earth; but there is also evil in the spiritual world, since Jesus saw it and underwent its influence. How did it enter that world?

Mr. Lanoue.—Where does man go to when he dies?

Mr. Tessier.—To the other world; the good to heaven and the wicked to hell.

Mr. Lanoue.—Add that the good are good affections, the wicked evil ones. This evil entered the spiritual world from the moment that the first man, who, unwilling to correct himself on earth, became a demon after his death, entered it. That demon was soon joined by others, who together form the impure mass of evil designated by the common people under the collective name of the Devil. Now I have told you that the evil, like the good, exercises great influence on earth.

Mr. Tessier.—But in truth, Mr. Lanoue, you transport me into a region of wonders. Thus, before evil was committed by man it could assume no form in his eyes; therefore, those monstrous figures, and those extraordinary forms which the seer or extatic perceives in the other world, did not then present themselves to his sight: everything was pure and harmonious in the images of the other world as in the heart of man.

Mr. Lanoue.—No doubt; when evil did not exist there could have been no representation of it.

Mr. Tessier.—That idea gives me much pleasure. Listen: these provoking forms are always running in my head; and

it is a great point gained for me that I can now imagine a time when there was a pure world not yet infested with this mass of hideous figures which shock me so much. I can imagine, also, that what has once occurred may occur again; and that if the thought of evil were effaced from the mind of man, there would cease to exist for him then, as before the fall, those monstrous images with which the world of the visionary is too often peopled. Going farther, I should almost conclude that the future world owes its forms entirely to the recollection of impressions received here below. But I require such an effort to conceive of this that my head becomes giddy.

Mr. Lanoue.—A few more conversations together, and you will probably not entertain the slightest doubt on this point.

Mr. Tessier.—Then you mean to say that the good and wicked angels were previously good and bad men, and that heaven and hell are peopled solely from earth. What admirable simplicity! But what about the expulsion of Satan spoken of by Milton?

Mr. Lanoue.—Moses says nothing about it. Two passages—one from St. Jude and the other from St. Peter—relative to those first men whom the Scriptures everywhere call angels, have alone given rise to a false interpretation of the Bible in this respect.

Mr. Tessier.—I am very happy to hear it. I was dreadfully shocked at the idea of Satan fighting against St. Michael. These are things which we can never understand. We can never be really pious when we believe such idle tales. I can now understand the temptations of Jesus. He permitted the approach of evil, which exists by nature in us all, and he drove it away in order to teach us to do the same. The scene of action and the details passed in the spiritual world—that admits of no objection.

Mr. Lanoue.—Observe for a moment, if you please, the details of this truly sublime scene. Jesus is conducted into the desert, where, after having fasted for forty days, he was hungry. Separated from God, the natural man, wandering like our Saviour in the desert of life, and deprived of real or heavenly love for a space of time represented by the mystic number forty, which signifies a complete condition—man, I repeat, after this complete state of abandonment, experiences this moral hunger, this desire of loving, without which his being would fall into inanition.

Mr. Tessier.—Oh, yes, Mr. Lanoue. I have travelled through this desert; I have myself fasted; I have hungered: it is what every man experiences.

Mr. Lanoue.—The tempter approaches and says to him, "Let these stones become bread." Evil or sin says to man who is hungry, "In place of searching for divine truth, ad-

dress yourself to that which possesses the least of it"—to the insensible stone, a striking emblem of purely material truth. The cold stone having nothing to offer him, Jesus, who is seeking for truth, says to the Evil, "It is written that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God."

Mr. Tessier.—The reply of God is that of man. When he is separated from God, when he seeks to love, it is not material nourishment alone which he needs, but divine truth, pure love, everything which proceeds from the lips of God. The expression used in the Scripture is sublime. Say to any one: Make yourself a heart of marble; he will reply: No, that cannot beat; I must have love. This word bread recalls to me the most sacred ceremony of our worship—that which no Christian can dispense with celebrating. What does the bread of the Communion signify? Is it also an emblem? Is the ceremony itself a simple commemoration? Pardon me for interrupting you; but this of vast importance.

Mr. Lanoue.—Bread and wine are the types and the necessary representatives of the good and the true emanating from God. The spiritual creation can only be apparent in our world under emblems borrowed from our earthly condition. In receiving the bread and wine, the Christian, if his heart be in a fit state, really receives the divine love and wisdom. The real presence of the divine being is there for him, and in order that the entire man may share in this action, in order that his senses may repeat the operation of his mind, he administers to his body the material nourishment which exactly represents the moral qualities that are about to animate his heart. The material presence is for the body; the real presence, that of love and wisdom, is for the soul. It represents, by the operation of eating and drinking, the spiritual process which takes place within him. The action of drinking represents that process by which he assimilates the truth to himself: it flows into him, as it were, like a healing liquor.

Mr. Tessier.—The sceptics will no longer profanely tell us that we eat our God! But if bread be the symbol of good, and wine that of truth, in making the faithful communicate only under one emblem, whilst he communicates himself under both, does not the Roman Catholic priest seem to say to the people, "There is the good, turn it to account; I keep to the truth, which is useless to you, to myself."

Mr. Lanoue.—Your epigram proves the necessity of retaining the two emblems. Let us continue our explanation. The Evil places, in thought, the regenerator who yields to the action, on the summit of the temple, and tells him to cast himself down without fear. Do you understand this second temptation, Mr. Tessier?

Mr. Tessier.—Not in the least.

Mr. Lanoue.—The first effect which a man experiences who is becoming regenerated and who perceives his God, is to raise himself towards him in thought, but without his love sharing in the action. That is the rock which I have already pointed out to you. The most sublime religious thought is nothing without acts of charity. It is the latter which constitute all religion. That was clearly then the most natural desire which the tempter could arouse in the heart of man. Jesus said to him, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Conquered in this attack, the Evil takes the Saviour to the summit of a mountain, and shows him from thence all the kingdoms of the earth.

Mr. Tessier.—Oh, that is impossible! The earth is round, Mr. Lanoue, and there is no mountain in the world from which we could see the antipodes!

Mr. Lanoue.—Impossible in a physical point of view, but very possible in a spiritual. Selfishness places us on the mountain of earthly desires, and from thence we devour with our eyes all the riches of the world. But the devil promises all that in vain to disinterested virtue; the latter replies, like Jesus, that true, pure, divine love, in a word, is the only thing that man should endeavour to acquire.

Mr. Tessier.—This history is very striking. It signifies, in a few words, that we must sacrifice to the good of others everything which concerns our personal interest, and this comprehends not a little, I assure you. Give self-interest the rein, indulge it to-day, and to-morrow it will demand more, the next day a little more still. At last its desires will know no limits, and all the kingdoms of the earth, with all their riches, would not be sufficient to appease it.

Mr. Lanoue.—Thus this trial is the last as it is the most difficult. The evil, or if you will, the devil, then left the Redeemer, and the angels approached and ministered unto him. Do you understand that?

Mr. Tessier.—Yes; the angels are the good affections which take the place of selfish sentiments in the heart. When we have advanced so far, our regeneration is finished, like the temptation of the Saviour. If Rousseau had been able to see things in that light, I assure you he would have become a Christian, for the temptation of Jesus was always a great stumbling-block to him.

Mr. Lanoue.—There is another phrase which you are going to pass over. *The angels ministered unto him*; the good affections in his heart did everything for him then. Man had absolutely nothing to do there. In fact, when we are under the influence of love, what do we find that is disagreeable? Are

we not ministered unto, so to speak, according to our wishes? God himself then does the work of man.

Mr. Tessier.—Ah! it is for this reason that the Bible represents God as a servant. That surpasses all the rest. My objections are over, Mr. Lanoue. I can now take my Bible, and never cease to draw from it lessons of instruction and delight, except when I attempt, as well as I can, to put these lessons into practice.

Mr. Lanoue. Before we conclude, let us resume the subject of the redemption, and sum it up in a few words. Here is the theory of it:—The communication between heaven and man is carried on by means of intermediate beings. These beings, who are free like us, can, by debasing or perfecting themselves, render the way which leads to God more easy or more difficult of access. You are aware, moreover, that these beings formerly lived as men on earth, and the generations which succeeded each other from the fall must have peopled the intermediate world with a great number of degraded beings, and thus closed the entrance to heaven? When once these premises are adopted, the redemption appears the most simple act which our reason can conceive. The Deity, in order to bring fallen man into closer communion with himself, was obliged to exercise a spiritual judgment upon the beings from whom we receive all our spiritual influence. As things which are homogeneous can alone touch and influence each other, he was obliged to descend to the level of these beings, and take a body like man, in order to render himself accessible, like man, to their influence. The descent of the Saviour upon our earth, therefore, placed the heavens in a new order, and subjugated hell, an operation which can be conceived as performed by one who alone had the power to raise human nature to the divine nature. That which he did once is accomplished for ever, the way is henceforth free, and the Redemption becomes a universal act, for all places and all times. On no other hypothesis can it be conceived how a God who appeared two thousand years ago in Palestine can act upon us at the present day; nor what there is in common between this individual, isolated, action, limited to one epoch and confined to a fractional part of the globe, and this general action of a God which is to exist throughout all ages, and be present in every part of the universe. If the Redemption is a means of salvation, what other means could God employ but that of arresting the influence which perverted the human race, and rendering divine that humanity which he had assumed in order to approach nearer to man, and elevate man's nature to himself? It is thus, Mr. Lanoue, that the Creator has acted as a Redeemer; it is thus that the two

worlds have been reunited; it is thus, in short, that man, by means of religion, is able to reunite himself to his Author. The word religion means to reunite, and you perceive plainly that we can only reunite what had been previously dis-united. An interruption in the relations between God and man is supposed by the word; and it is only when he is under the influence of religion that man admits by this word that he reunites his being to the Divine Being.

Mr. Tessier.—Who would have thought that in so short a time I could have been able to conceive all this? It is at once so sublime and so simple. Thus without a knowledge of the spiritual laws, the Scriptures are unintelligible. The Holy Scriptures are merely the history of the invisible in its relations with the visible; they are the secret memoirs of the soul, if I may be permitted to use the expression. There is one thing, however, very extraordinary to the Christian; namely, that although the gospel is based upon the prophets and the books of Moses, the latter do not say, in one single place, that the soul is immortal.

Mr. Lanoue.—I shall examine this subject presently before we have done with the miracles. You now look on them as striking proofs of that spiritual state of being in which we lived before the fall, and which must necessarily reappear so soon as the new birth into the spiritual life is felt by man. They are not, therefore, interruptions of the ordinary laws of nature; they are phenomena belonging to a primitive state of existence which we recover through means of the Redemption. A great revolution or fall formerly took place in the human race; it has been restored to the laws of order by the Saviour; and such at the present day is the force of habit, that disorder seems to us the ordinary law of nature, and order appears to us an anomaly.

Mr. Tessier.—And yet, except on the hypothesis of this original disarrangement and the rearrangement which succeeded it, man is the strangest mystery of Nature. It is therefore much more simple to consider miracles as facts of a special nature or condition, which formerly belonged to us, and which may again become our own, than to reject this supposition without being able to explain its nature or demonstrate its hollowness, and to assert, in short, that the human condition, as displayed at the birth of every man, is his true condition, and that religion is a useless institution. This being granted, tell me what you think of the silence observed by Moses with respect to the immortality of the soul—for, in truth, he never once speaks of it.

Mr. Lanoue.—No more than the commander of an army tells a soldier, in the presence of an enemy, that he has a sabre and a musket. That is a matter of course for the soldier.

It was in the same way that the immortality of the soul was understood by those who read or heard Moses; of this you may be assured. The objection is similar to that which you made when speaking of the apple plucked by Eve. Have you not seen that the Bible contains the history of man in his relations with God, expressed by the aid of images taken from material nature?

Mr. Tessier.—It is these images alone then which can appear in the narrative. Those who rested upon the words have seen only matter; those who have gone beyond the literal sense are the only persons who have seen the spirit. This is tolerably satisfactory.

Mr. Lanoue.—Allow me to complete your idea. Everything in ancient times was a symbol or figure of spiritual things; the latter were the only objects present to the thoughts of the first men. Their degenerate successors, seeing in these emblems only the material forms, have handed down to us the doctrine that in the beginning of the world men were materialists, and that they adored the elements, the heavenly bodies, and similar objects. It is thus that many have maintained that the sun was the only god of ancient nations, because these nations represented the divine love by that luminary.

Mr. Tessier.—It is in this manner that we must explain the views of Dupuis and Volney.

Mr. Lanoue.—What! Has this worn-out system of a universe-god been newly vamped up?

Mr. Tessier.—Are not the works of which I speak exhibited on all our book-stalls? are they not even hawked about throughout our country towns? I acknowledge that "The Ruins" are well worthy of their title. The author has produced at once a title and a pun. His work is in truth an engine for reducing everything to dust.

Mr. Lanoue.—That is quite true. Dupuis has proved better than any other writer that the ancients looked on the sun and the constellations as objects of worship. But natural objects were all originally designed to recall to man the doctrine of a union with his Creator. They were books, written in ineffaceable characters, which, like those of Moses, had a figurative signification. Fallen man grew more and more earthly, and seeing natural objects play an important part in the worship which had been transmitted to them, said, "Our ancestors adored nature;" and then, following their example, they adored it themselves.

Mr. Tessier.—So the sun was never adored, as Dupuis says?

Mr. Lanoue.—It was adored, but only among degenerate nations. The first men saw in it only the natural emblem of the light and heat of that life-giving orb, which the Scriptures

call the sun of justice. The Scriptures are not the only monument of antiquity which speak of a spiritual sun. We have a mass of interesting productions upon this symbolical luminary. Orpheus consecrated a hymn to it; Julian the Apostate recognised it and sung of it himself.

Mr. Tessier.—The worship of the sun, then, is not to be wondered at.

Mr. Lanoue.—What Dupuis advances and proves is quite true with respect to the epochs which succeeded the earliest ages of society. It is not at all true with respect to the first ages themselves. These emblems were adopted before the adorers of nature appeared; it is not they who gave them their signification, and consequently it is not from them that we must seek their interpretation. But everything which has been handed down to us from the most remote antiquity, proves clearly that in those times they were only emblems and not realities. The fact of borrowing symbols from nature does not in the least prove that it is nature which we must adore. Nature is not represented by these symbols; on the contrary, she herself is only a representative of something moral. When you are shown a flower as an emblem of moral virtue, you never imagine that virtue has its origin in this flower. But this is foreign to our inquiry, and I return to the subject of second sight, which we have recognised as a fact of the spiritual order, and which in this way furnishes a probable explanation of the visions of the prophets.

Mr. Tessier.—Then, Mr. Lanoue, those who saw the Saviour, after his resurrection, merely opened the eyes of the spirit?

Mr. Lanoue.—Their spiritual view was opened—the Scriptures say so distinctly. Well, with the spiritual view necessarily follows the view of the spiritual world and the objects which it contains.

Mr. Tessier.—Then, whenever this spiritual sight is opened or developed by any means in man, he always sees some object or objects. Thus, when Jesus died, the saints were seen in Jerusalem issuing from their tombs. This signifies that those in Jerusalem whose eyes were opened, saw spirits whose mortal remains were deposited in the cemetery, but who really existed themselves in an immaterial world, where nothing dies. The impious interpretation of the Bible by the so-called almoners of the King of Prussia, is powerless against this mode of explanation. I recollect these commentators maintain that, if men long dead had really issued from their tombs, all the city of Jerusalem would have become Christians. Your explanation removes this difficulty.

Mr. Lanoue.—As often as the disciples of Jesus or those who accompanied him saw things incompatible with the laws

of matter take place before their eyes, they made use, without knowing it, of the eyes of the spirit, and then saw scenes from the other world, which in their ignorance they attributed to the present one.

Mr. Tessier.—But this eloquence given to the apostles, this power of the Holy Spirit with which they were endowed, is, it appears to me, a miracle in itself, which does not come under your theory; for, can you imagine that people could immediately acquire genius and eloquence without a miracle?

Mr. Lanoue.—To accomplish this, God only requires to produce in man the impressions and the sight of the immaterial world. By introducing man into the spiritual existence, you suddenly develope in him faculties which in the ordinary condition lie dormant. The phenomena of natural somnambulism prove that many persons when in the sleeping state are endowed with the most persuasive eloquence; no one will dispute this fact. The soul when disengaged from the senses really acquires a quickness of intellect, a warmth of feeling, which it does not possess in the waking state. But when a man thus affected returns to his usual condition, he becomes, like the good La Fontaine, a clodpole as before. In this second existence, which spiritual medicine and extasis open up to us, men speak as the spirit from above inspires them, and this spirit does not require to take degrees in our universities.

Mr. Tessier.—But why did not the miracles of our Saviour convert all those who witnessed them?

Mr. Lanoue.—What are commonly called miracles, but, more properly, facts of the spiritual order, are simply proofs of the existence of that order: they are not actions which destroy our moral liberty by forcing us to believe. That which induces us to believe is the heart alone. It is for want of knowing the human heart deeply enough that we attribute this effect to intellect alone. Intellect is always at liberty to reject or to adopt any phenomena whatever presented to it. If we see a blind man recover his vision—"Oh!" says one, "it is a deception;" "See," says another, "the juggler with the clay which he took has really removed a cataract which hindered the man from seeing." A third approaches, and demonstrates to the crowd that it is not a miracle, because it was by successive gradations that the man in question recovered his sight. When something is presented to the understanding which it cannot comprehend, it admires at first, but afterwards, if it sees any probability of explaining it, it abandons its first admiration as folly. If, on the contrary, it feels itself enchained, it becomes still more exacting. It is not enough to heal in its presence, you must create new organs, in order to force it to believe. It is not enough merely

to say to a paralytic, "Arise and walk;" you must be able to produce new fingers on a hand which has none. If you could imagine the thousand-and-one pretexts which the understanding frames for not believing, it would display human nature in so narrow a point of view as to excite your pity and contempt.

Mr. Tessier.—It is, no doubt, for this reason, that Jesus said of an incredulous man, that even if one were to rise from the dead he would not believe.

Mr. Lanoue.—In fact he would say: "Bah! the man was in a trance." Curiosity never stops in its career. You are yourself an example of it. Love alone is stable. When we endeavour to know what we must do in order to love, and limit ourselves to that, we obtain it quickly enough. If we wish, on the contrary, to know, in order that we may be forced to believe, we shall never arrive at this result; it would be contrary to the laws of divine wisdom. Before the understanding can yield to evidence, the heart must first be put into a state to profit by it. Without that nothing can be done. Ignorant of their own nature, and more superstitious than the uneducated themselves, our so-called intellectual people demand, before they will believe, that their understanding be subjugated by a miracle, as if God wished them to yield to him precisely when they can no longer comprehend anything. Divine Justice leaves them with their ridiculous claims, and for their own happiness they remain in darkness. If they emerged for a moment from it by an effort, it would be only to fall back more deeply the moment afterwards. Thus the Scripture tells us that God blinded the heart of the Jews. The operation which appears here to proceed from God proceeds in reality from man.

Mr. Tessier.—Excuse me for a moment, Mr. Lanoue. Here is an explanation which I have found out myself. It is said in the Bible that God hardened the heart of Pharaoh that he should not believe. What a sudden light is thrown on this passage! I formerly accused God of partiality for this conduct; but I now understand it aright. The heart of Pharaoh was formed like that of the incredulous man we have been speaking of, he wished to be forced to believe.

Mr. Lanoue.—Precisely. In our earthly career, God often appears to blind us in that manner, and we should thank his Providence for it. When our heart is not fit for real love, God does not permit us to receive it. In fact, if we received it before being perfectly prepared for it, our passions, not yet subdued, would soon lead us to reject it; and when the moment came for us to turn it to account, we should no longer desire to do so, since we had previously rejected it. That is why a person who wishes to be converted to God at such a

moment finds no conviction in his breast. God knows that this man would profane the truth, and profanation is without remedy.

Mr. Tessier.—Everything must be ripe for the effect which it is to produce. Man mistakes his impatience for maturity. God leaves him to himself. He sends him no miracles to force him to change his life.

Mr. Lanoue.—If by accident our intellect were subjugated by a miracle which would force us to believe, we should not on that account arrive at conviction, as we do not believe by sight alone, but by the united effort of all our powers. We should very soon lay aside our admiration, and find out some system to prove the impossibility of the fact in question. Believing that we had been deceived, and having employed no sincerity in our examination, we should never arrive at an avowal of the truth. This may seem a paradox; but reflect on it, Mr. Tessier, and with your usual good sense, you cannot fail to see it clearly.

Mr. Tessier.—It is as clear as day. Spiritual acts are proofs of the spiritual origin of a doctrine. They are not miracles; and it is not the intention of Providence to draw men to itself by a forced conversion. Would it be the better for having as disciples those who have no other claim to be so but that of having been dazzled? On the contrary, it desires men whom the sight of certain facts leads to acquiesce in moral truth and love. I perfectly comprehend your plan! You would transport a sceptic perfectly awake into the other world; he would acknowledge, with you, all that he sees there; but on his return, and when again under the empire of his passions, which reject the light forced upon them, he would say, "I certainly saw that, but I was dreaming." Everything opposed to his depraved love is to him a dream. The disposition of the soul is all that is necessary for believing.

Mr. Lanoue.—As long as incredulity is predominant, truth cannot penetrate into the heart. You will have faith when you have sincerity. It is by the last that you must commence. The incredulous have the folly to think they can begin with the first; but this is contrary to the laws of nature. Raise yourself above self, and you will be convinced. It is not by endeavouring to strengthen the proofs of religion that you will ever attain to religion itself, but by endeavouring to weaken the passions which tend to alienate you from it. You have fully comprehended and analysed my ideas, Mr. Tessier. Will you now sum up the spiritual theory which we have been discussing, in order that we may deduce from it its proper consequences.

Mr. Tessier.—It is my turn, Mr. Lanoue, to refuse to prolong this conversation. Before entering into the consequences

to be deduced from the theory of miracles, I wish thoroughly to master this system which is so new to me, and to bring myself into a fit condition to comprehend what you have had the goodness to promise me on some future occasion.

Mr. Lanoue.—This examination will lead to nothing less than the whole hieroglyphic key to the Bible. That, I think, is a subject worthy of your meditations. I have a sufficiently high idea of your perspicacity to believe that one or two explanations will put you upon the path of all the others, and enable you to read the Scriptures unaided, without being arrested by the difficulties which formerly embarrassed you.

Mr. Tessier.—You cannot doubt my desire to go to the root of a doctrine which permits me to be pious without superstition, a believer through my understanding, and by means of which I shall be enabled to cling closely to God and his Gospel, and never again be in danger of losing sight of that future world which you have made known to me.

So saying, the notary took his hat and cane, and, respectfully saluting the philosopher, he withdrew with the air of a man well satisfied with himself and with his teacher.

ELEVENTH CONVERSATION.

THE HIEROGLYPHIC KEY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

THE curiosity of Mr. Tessier, although much less eager than formerly, was still not entirely satisfied. Presuming that the conversation he was about to have would be the last, he took his measures so as to avoid any interruption whilst listening to the philosopher. "You promised me," said he when they met, "some examples of your system of interpreting the Scriptures, in order to put me upon the way of interpreting the others."

Mr. Lanoue.—As the Holy Scriptures treat of spiritual man, and not of natural man and the things of the earth, they should be understood entirely according to the laws of the spiritual order. It was of this order we were speaking on the last occasion when I had the pleasure of seeing you. Will you have the goodness to sum up our opinions on that point?

Mr. Tessier.—I fully comprehend, Mr. Lanoue, the manner in which the Saviour acts upon those who approach him in all confidence. Whilst he modifies the machine, which experiences beyond all doubt a spiritual action, he opens the eyes of the spirit, and enables it to perceive what is concealed from our ordinary sight. Hence a crowd of phenomena, incomprehensible to our narrow mode of conception, but perfectly clear as facts of the spiritual order, and which are applicable to the

other world as to our own. Thus, what to us is disorder, because we refer it to this world, is order if we view it in connection with the other.

Mr. Lanoue.—That is precisely my idea. Observe, if you please, that the vision, thus opened, having the power of perceiving real objects as we perceive them in our dreams (for there is no moral quality which we do not represent under some image), the first men, before the fall, saw these visions more frequently than we can at the present day. The narratives which we take for pictures of imaginary objects, were the exact representations of their perceptions in the other world.

Mr. Tessier.—That brings us back to the theory of forms, which you have explained to me. Their sentiments and affections naturally took a form, for things purely moral and abstract cannot exist. Before they can be present to our perceptions, they must assume a body to the spiritual eye. I have no objection to make there; but since we are on the subject of the Prophets, I have been told that the Redemption announced by them was merely an event foreseen by their wisdom. Having seen Samaria fall under the yoke, they might very well, as persons of experience, predict the same fate for Jerusalem; and to console their fellow-citizens, they announced to them at the same time an epoch of deliverance. That is a very pretty romance, to say the least. It does not explain to me, however, the images seen by the prophets, which you present to me as emblems; and then their vision is a prediction which has nothing to do with human foresight. Our philosophers, however, endeavour to explain the Christian Redemption in this way, and they find people foolish enough to believe them. Oh, what fools there are in the world!

Mr. Lanoue.—You are not charitable, Mr. Tessier. It is not long since you were not so learned as you are now. You do not even know, perhaps, of predictions prior to the taking of Samaria, and which consequently destroy, from top to bottom, the system of the sceptics.

Mr. Tessier.—I only know the promise made to Adam, when God announced to the serpent that the woman should bruise his head.

Mr. Lanoue.—All Genesis speaks of this promise. Jacob, when dying, repeated it to his sons. Lastly, the book of Psalms, which was written long before the fall of Samaria, speaks almost solely of the reign of the Messiah.

Mr. Tessier.—Besides, is it not evident that since there was a Fall there ought to be a Redemption? But it is not that which puzzles me. It has been said that the prophets did not see the other world, because in that case they would all have seen the same thing. Now Isaiah, a personage of high rank,

saw thrones and magnificence; while Ezekiel, who was born in an obscure condition, only saw trivial matters.

Mr. Lanoue.—It is the objection of Spinoza; but you can now destroy it perfectly.

Mr. Tessier.—Not very clearly, I am afraid.

Mr. Lanoue.—Every man finding in the invisible world the representation of the things appertaining to his ruling love, it is clear that these same truths assume different images, according to the point of view of each observer. The impression made upon the visionaries is the same in them all; but in each case it is expressed differently. The images they saw were in harmony with the tastes and peculiarities of the seers. There is no absolute heaven; it cannot therefore be seen by all under the same form.

Mr. Tessier.—No absolute heaven, Mr. Lanoue! That is probably the truest and most suggestive idea ever offered to man. Are there, in fact, two imaginations upon earth exactly similar? Does not every person dwell in his own thoughts, and in these thoughts is he not surrounded by different objects? The symbols are varied, although the impressions are the same. In this manner we can explain very clearly the fantastic portions of the prophetic visions; they are certainly things seen, and not figures of speech, as our short-sighted critics would have us believe. Your theory gives us an entirely new view of the poetic theory of the Bible; but it allows a very great difficulty to remain. The whole life of the prophets did not pass in visions; they had, like us, an external existence, and certain details of this existence are not much to be admired. Delicacy sometimes even forbids the mention of their singular adventures. The cakes of Hosea, and the two marriages of Ezekiel are not very edifying matters.

Mr. Lanoue.—The prophets were not merely heralds, commissioned to announce the divine intentions; they were also speaking pictures of the state of society at the epoch in which each appeared. They represented the spiritual state of the Church by figures which are not very refined, as you say, because, in fact, the Church itself was not then in an edifying condition. Their life was intended to be a means of warning the people of their corruption.

Mr. Tessier.—In our day wise men correct fools by giving them good examples, which are very often thrown away; did the ancients then correct sinners by imitating them? It is in this way that children, who follow the teachings of nature better than we do, correct the faults of their playfellows; they mimic evil so as to make those blush who commit it. Your idea is singular enough; we have yet to see if it accord with the Bible.

Mr. Lanoue.—Isaiah states, in the 20th chapter, that he was ordered to go naked and without shoes for three years, *to serve as a sign and a wonder*. There is also a very plain proof of this in Ezekiel. After having received an order to *carry away his furniture* during the day, to leave his house in the evening by a hole made in the wall, and other things of a similar nature, he is commanded to say these words to the house of Israel: *I am made a wonder for you; that which I have done shall be done to you*. The cakes of dung, which so shock you, represented the *polluted bread of the Israelites*. Their spiritual nourishment was then similar to this material food from which the apostle prayed the Lord to be dispensed. The marriages of Hosea were a living symbol of the *adulterous doctrine* of the Hebrew people. Nothing is better proved, and at the same time more natural.

Mr. Tessier.—How many pages of sarcasm must now be expunged from the works of our sceptics! Your explanation appears to me conclusive. I recollect St. Matthew relates that St. John the Baptist, who was also a prophet, was clad in a garment of camel's skin, that he had a girdle of leather, and that his food was locusts and wild honey. The verse which contains these details is placed quite alone in the narrative, one does not know well why. We have little direct interest in this account of his dress and food. Learned men have puzzled their brains to prove that the locusts of Palestine were tolerably palatable, but I do not believe a word of it. If it was the intention of John the Baptist to offer a picture of the condition of the Jews at that time, the thing would become less singular. In this case we have only to know the particular sense of the emblems.

Mr. Lanoue.—The Jews, as you are aware, had become purely material in their ideas of divine things. Now the camel signifies natural science, and the leather or the skin signifies the exterior. The Baptist's clothing therefore was a figure of the state of the synagogue. The perverted people were then in a state of sensual falsehood of the lowest degree, and this falsehood in the Bible is represented by locusts. The wild honey, being an emblem of natural pleasure, signifies that moral delights were unknown to them.

Mr. Tessier.—Give me at once your hieroglyphic key of the sacred book, that I may be able to read the Bible as fluently as you. Before we can admit that your explanations are not arbitrary, however, we must examine those passages where the camel, leather, locusts, and honey are mentioned. I can only recollect just now that Bossuet, in his commentary on the Apocalypse, says that locusts represent heresies. That is pretty near your interpretation.

Mr. Lanoue.—I shall now give you the general key to the

Sacred Book. This I expect will remove all your doubts at one blow, so that you will only require in reading to make use of your intellect.

Mr. Tessier.—Well, then, let us commence. It is evident that the Scripture should be interpreted by a doctrine, otherwise it would be to us a sealed book. Thus the Catholics, who hold to tradition without explaining anything, and the Protestants, who disseminate the Sacred Scriptures on all sides, and trust to the sagacity of each individual to interpret it in his own way, are alike mistaken. Jesus spent his whole life in explaining the Scriptures to his disciples. The fathers of the Church, in the first three centuries, did nothing but write commentaries upon the difficult passages of the Bible. The Book of Acts, the only authority on which the Roman religion relies for support in establishing the pre-eminence of ecclesiastical authority, affords us also an evident proof that the Sacred Volume must be explained before it can be comprehended and received. Philip having met an Ethiopian eunuch, who was reading the prophet Isaiah, asked him if he understood what he read. "How can I understand it," replied the latter, "since no man explains it to me?" Every one in the present day will be inclined to make the same reply, and the priests are obliged to do for every one what Philip did for the eunuch.

Mr. Lanouc.—But to do this, as you very justly remarked, we must be in possession of an explanatory doctrine; now I know no other satisfactory one but that which we have been discussing hitherto. Till now, the Catholics and Protestants, whom you accuse, could not act otherwise than they have done. The Lord did not permit the Sacred Book to be anything but a sealed letter till the time of his coming. Examine the matter as you like, the third dispensation furnishes the only key to every enigma.

Mr. Tessier.—You cannot at all events be accused of producing far-fetched proofs in support of your new religious era. Everybody, in fact, proclaims it, the Socialists as well as the Ultramontanists. But let us return to our subject.

Mr. Lanoue.—The first religious books of all nations were written by extatics, who enjoyed spiritual communications. They filled their writings, therefore, with things which we in the present day, limited as we are to our five senses, can no longer comprehend without having recourse to translation.

Mr. Tessier.—I see it is quite indispensable. That which is written in a particular language can only be comprehended by one who knows that language. We may be asked, why use allegories when we can speak plainly? God cannot have had any intention to deceive us. Without doubt; but we should

rather ask, why has man fallen? Why has he forgotten the language of the country which he formerly inhabited?

Mr. Lanoue.—The Bible speaks by emblems, because it speaks the primitive language. In this idiom divine principles are expressed by terrestrial objects; for this reason, that moral events absolutely require physical objects as their representatives. The two worlds are intimately united, Mr. Tessier. That which is an attribute in the one, is a body in the other; but the body is a necessary appendage of the intellectual attribute, it is the exact correspondence of it. This world, as we have said, is a system of invisible things which the Creator has manifested visibly to us. Is it not clear, then, that to him who has no longer any intercourse with the invisible, the images which are derived from it have no longer any meaning, and that a translation into our material language is necessary?

Mr. Tessier.—No one has given us so satisfactory a reason as this for the necessity of Biblical emblems. It is founded on the very fact of the fall, and Divine Justice cannot be accused of creating it. To comprehend the language of God, we must return to God—that is evident.

Mr. Lanoue.—There you have the origin, Mr. Tessier, of the primitive language. Thus you see that the last of the sacred books, the Apocalypse, is written in the same style as that of the most ancient prophets. We discover things in it which have no representatives upon earth, and it is not by comparing the expressions of the writer with those which are in use here below, that we can comprehend them. Man when united to God is endowed with this second sight, the existence of which we have recognised, and by it he penetrates into the immaterial world.

Mr. Tessier.—In calling this mode of sensation a primitive mode, do we not seem to imply that in this way man was united to his Author?

Mr. Lanoue.—It is probable that along with a more ardent love and less inclination to concentrate himself in his own being, man had also a more direct means of communication with heaven. It is love which forms the whole man in a moral point of view, and, as I have already told you, we cannot be in any moral state without our physical condition in some degree conforming itself to it. I think, then, that the men of former days, who were endowed with faculties more highly developed than ours, enjoyed also an organization appropriate to these faculties. Clairvoyance, both earthly and spiritual, appears to be the primitive mode of perception, and when this mode of perception reappears, we may, as it were, perceive the state of man as he was before the fall.

Mr. Tessier.—How profound is this subject, and how well everything is united in your system! That is why divine things are not perceived simply by the exercise of the reason, but by enthusiasm, which raises us above ourselves. There are many enigmas unveiled by this means. But I draw from it, besides, a conclusion of the highest importance. If the first men were extatics, if the primitive revelation was merely a relation of their perceptions in the spiritual world, it follows that the last revelation derived from the same source should clearly explain the first.

Mr. Lanoue.—Your observation is perfectly correct. It is, in fact, the last revelation alone which offers us a solution of those enigmas in which the most remote antiquity is shrouded from the eyes of the learned.

Mr. Tessier.—Thus your science is not only an enlightenment of the heart and spirit, but also the history of society. How far are we led by these views!

Mr. Lanoue.—It appears that, originally, objects were not named, but were actually seen—not materially, but such as they existed in the spiritual world. This gallery of images, these terms which are all emblems, make the entire Bible an inexplicable hieroglyphic to the man who looks for the originals of the images in external nature. He, on the contrary, who considers them as impressions received by persons in a state of extasis, has alone the true key to their meaning. Thus, the expressions of the prophets are the description of the images seen by them in the world to which their vision was directed: images pure in heaven, full of confusion in the infernal abyss, and a mingled web of truth and falsehood in the intermediate world.

Mr. Tessier.—Then all the Bible was written by men who lived habitually in the spiritual world, and who painted its images. If so, a translation of these symbols into spoken language is necessary for their comprehension.

Mr. Lanoue.—Precisely so. Observe, however, that all the books of the Bible do not possess this character. We recognise the spiritual language in the books of Moses, Joshua, Judges, Kings, Psalms, in the Prophets, the Evangelists, and the Apocalypse. The other books of the Bible were written under the guidance of reason and feeling alone. Those who composed them were not *seers*, but pious men, whose counsels and maxims are useful to men in this world. Thus you see clearly that the book of Psalms was written by a seer, and that of Ecclesiastes by a philosopher who lays no claim to divine communication. In the New Testament, the epistles of the apostles were written by them in moments when their spiritual vision was not opened. We find in them counsels and precepts useful to faith, but none of those prophecies

of future events which would necessarily be clothed in images of an immaterial nature.

Mr. Tessier.—In fact, I see no traces of symbolical language, except in the books you first mentioned. If these are in your eyes the only sacred books, your pretensions have some foundation in Scripture. Jesus himself enumerated these books when he said that *all which had been written in the law of Moses, in the prophets, and in the Psalms, must be fulfilled.*

Mr. Lanoue.—To sum up, we are to conclude that the sacred books of the Scripture were produced by persons in a state of extasis or spiritual clairvoyance, and are filled with images which can only be comprehended by a profound study of the modes of perception in that state. Observe, also, that the more a man is naturally disposed to enter into a state of extasis, or to have visions, the more does he find in the Bible things which are not to be found there by others.

Mr. Tessier.—That is why the Scriptures have made so many people mad.

Mr. Lanoue.—And the reason appears very simple. They attain by means of extasis to the region of life. How many things must they not discover there! In this spiritual flight, extravagance as well as profound reason may be displayed, for in the other world there are both truth and falsehood, good and evil. That does not hinder those explanations of the Bible which are furnished by individuals in extasis from being the truest.

Mr. Tessier.—But if there be amongst extatics both true and false prophets, how can we distinguish the one from the other?

Mr. Lanoue.—By the means which you have employed to convince yourself of the divine mission of Jesus Christ. His doctrine proves his divinity. It is the same thing here. The truth of every extatic's perceptions must be proved by the doctrine of that extatic. Does the doctrine incline us to evil? Then the clairvoyant has communicated with the impure part of the world into which he has penetrated. Does the doctrine, on the contrary, bear the stamp of good? Then, as the infernal spirit cannot give any counsel contrary to his nature, the extatic must have been in relation with the source of all goodness and truth. It is in this way that you may satisfy yourself of the truth of Swedenborg's visions. Here it is your reason alone which sits in judgment on the doctrine.

Mr. Tessier.—That is, in fact, what the Scripture says. Do what the doctrine recommends you to do, and you will see by the result if it come from God or not. The devil, in fact, cannot counsel good. That is why our Saviour also says: "A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand."

Mr. Lanoue.—This explains to you also how in visions

there may be either madness or common sense. The power of communication is not in itself a species of madness ; it is the end attained which may become such. Thus one extatic may have pure thoughts, another fantastic dreams—each will have his own world. Isaiah saw his heaven, and Mahomet saw his. We may say the same of Swedenborg and St. Theresa.

Mr. Tessier.—Then Mahomet was not an impostor ?

Mr. Lanoue.—Certainly not. He was a visionary—a spiritual clairvoyant—an extatic. Supposing him to have been a hypocrite, how should he have invented precisely those things which are most calculated to shock the understanding ? Those who make human religions act in a different way. They endeavour to make their doctrine square with human reason. Now Mahomet is a visionary from one end of his book to the other. It is scarcely necessary to add, that he has abused his faculty of vision. The Gospel was borrowed from the good and true part of the spiritual world ; the Koran took its rise in the impure and false part. The doctrine of each proves its origin.

Mr. Tessier.—Thus those good Catholic saints who had so many visions were people in communication with certain spirits as enthusiastic as themselves. Their perceptions were as true as possible ; it was merely their heart or their mind which was astray. Your theory explains to me very clearly what you told me formerly, viz. why a sceptical clairvoyant, for example, does not see the same things as an extatic who believes. But why have we so few extatics in the present day ?

Mr. Lanoue.—Because man defends himself by his denials and doubts against all spiritual action. It is permitted to him to live either the life of the senses or that of the soul ; every one obtains what he desires. If any action, even the most simple, such as a presentiment, happens to give us an idea of something in us beyond the empire of time and space, we are ashamed to tell it, we pass our hand over our brow, and the impression is forgotten. It is in this way that so many visions pass unperceived by us. If we gave the same attention and impartiality to spiritual phenomena that we give to those of external nature, all this would very soon be known and acknowledged.

Mr. Tessier.—What indisposes us also to do so is the fact that we see so many dupes, fools, even madmen among visionaries, and that if we give the least attention to what they say, we run the risk of passing likewise for weak-minded men. Now, Mr. Lanoue, no other theory than yours explains how error and truth may exist together in this sort of communication. Men believe that, spirits once freed from matter, can perceive nothing but the truth. If your ideas were

more widely known, they would furnish an explanation of all these phenomena. For example, I now see the reply to the objection I made to you when speaking of miracles in our last conversation; I said that the imagination is often very imaginary. Who doubts it? That does not prove that it is not a view into the spiritual world. I am delighted with these last explanations. Before I saw you, I did not believe in visions at all; but if it had entered my brain that the thing was at all possible, I should have felt certain that this means of communication must be the exclusive privilege of virtue and genius. I now see distinctly that it is a mode of perception belonging to human nature in general, when modified in a certain manner, and that as this mode introduces us to a mixed world, we naturally communicated with impure as well as with pure spirits. I was shocked also at seeing so many persons of weak intellect amongst extatics. But the thing is quite natural. The simple by their very simplicity call spirits to them without doubt, instead of driving them away. To be a receptacle in any way one must be simple of heart. All my difficulties respecting your theory would vanish, if I could only explain the strange figures seen by extatics. Their mode of perception has always seemed to me characterized by a certain extravagance; it very often makes us acquainted only with things which have no analogy in nature, and with beings formed of a hideous or ludicrous jumble of the disjointed parts of other beings.

Mr. Lanoue.—That is exactly what ought to prove to you beyond a doubt that extasis was the primitive mode of perception. All the monuments of antiquity which we possess, present to our view monstrous figures which reason cannot explain. India and Egypt, which may be regarded as the earliest cradles of civilization, are filled with incomprehensible monuments, which we may, with great probability, suppose to have been produced by visionaries. The manner in which they have been acted upon in the other world, can alone furnish a key to the enigma. Every thought there has its appropriate expression. Simple ideas or feelings have a simple object for their emblem—mixed sentiments have mixed objects like themselves, and hence arise those composite figures which we never find in real Nature, but which we create in imagination every moment here below.

Mr. Tessier.—I think I understand you. The fantastic flights of the imagination on earth, being considered by us as simple abstractions, do not appear to us to form these groups; but if our sentiments assumed a form in the eye of reason, as they do in the eyes of the extatic, it is clear that, according to the nature of our thoughts and affections, we should really produce mixed or simple, harmonious or irregular images.

If some enchanter, in short, turned into stone the airy fabrics of our imagination, we should be immediately surrounded by monuments like those of Egypt and India. With the twenty-four letters of the alphabet we make books to infinity, no single one of which resembles the other. I can conceive that with the same number of figures or types in the spiritual world we might produce all possible forms. I have no difficulty about this, and we shall therefore pass on, if you please, to these fixed figures.

Mr. Lanoue.—I mentioned to you just now the spiritual sun, the emblem of the Deity. It is this life-giving orb which the visionary who is illuminated by the light from above, and warmed by the divine heat, often speaks of. The word sun, in his language, is synonymous with the word God. All the divine qualities, in fact, find their type in the orb which gives us light. Does not our ordinary language indicate the analogy between the light which lights up the eyes of the body, and the truth which shines in the gaze of intellect? Do we not remark a point of resemblance between the love which burns within our hearts and the material heat which warms our corporeal frames? The words light and heat, therefore, stood in the sacred vocabulary in place of the words truth and love. The latter were metaphysical expressions, and such expressions cannot be conveyed by the primitive language.

Mr. Tessier.—And when conventional language was subsequently formed, people in using heat and light in place of love and truth, thought they made use of a metaphor; but what they believed was a figure of speech was really a perception. In the Bible the material object necessarily involves or covers the moral object. This is not the result of an allegorical system more or less ingeniously framed, but a consequence of the sensations felt by those by whom the Bible was written. There can be nothing arbitrary in these explanations. The spiritual nature proves them.

Mr. Lanoue.—In the human body every organ is an apparatus for carrying out a spiritual function. In extasis, it is the latter which must be understood when the former is named by the visionary. Does he speak of the arm of a man?—Instead of arm read strength, for the arm is the emblem of power. The arm of God is frequently mentioned in the sacred writers; and you see clearly that this expression signifies the power of God. *The right arm of God* signifies power in its highest degree.

Mr. Tessier.—That is quite plain; the instrument is taken for the thing. We say the arm of justice to express the power given to it by the law.

Mr. Lanoue.—You see by these examples the truth of

what I told you when speaking of the most obscure subject we have hitherto discussed, I mean *the form of heaven*. All the parts of the human body have a spiritual signification. As men differ one from another in faculties, they appear in the type-world assigned to different organs.

Mr. Tessier.—Each of our conversations clears up the one which went before. I can now conceive some idea of the form of heaven. Each quality of mind being designated by the organ which is at once its seat and its emblem, it follows that the entire of these qualities is represented by the whole of these organs in a mass, that is to say, by the human body—the type and model of all organizations. That is a very satisfactory view.

Mr. Lanoue.—You have seized the idea, without waiting for the two centuries which you believed must elapse before the human race could comprehend it.

Mr. Tessier.—There are certain parts of the human body frequently mentioned in the Bible, the meaning of which is not quite so obvious. We often find language there which our critics call indecent. The Song of Solomon, for example, has scandalized chaste readers not a little.

Mr. Lanoue.—It is certain, nevertheless, that these organs have an exact relation to certain intellectual functions of man. The Church has always adopted the figure of a marriage between the Lord and herself; because there is, in fact, a harmonious union between the Good which she ought to propose to herself as her object, and the Truth which emanates from God to guide her. In describing this spiritual marriage, the sacred authors have designated the two parts of this same whole under the natural emblem of the two sexes. It is so evident that physical love is emblematic of moral love, that regeneration was figured among the Jews by circumcision. This ceremony was so clearly an emblem, that David himself says in the Psalms, that it is the circumcision of the heart alone which is agreeable to God.

Mr. Tessier.—I now comprehend why prostitution was so often celebrated in the festivals of the ancients. Our sceptics have fancied they discovered in these the worship of the fecundity of Nature; but it was really the worship of the mind and heart, figured by the organs which are their emblems. Prostitution and debauched love had their altars, when the degenerate nations, having broken off all relation with the spiritual world, mistook emblems for realities. They made a divinity of the unchaste Venus, as they had made a god of the material sun.

Mr. Lanoue.—Thus, the ideas which I have mentioned are naturally associated with the union of man and woman. You recollect that, in explaining the fall, we compared the human

understanding to man and the human will to woman. This idea is one of the great traditions handed down from the primitive revelation. In that revelation everything was united by a mystic marriage. The good and the true, the two principles of creation, were there represented as a bride and bridegroom. Divine wisdom and divine love, by which this good and this truth exist, were figured forth by the thought as two faculties of different sexes. These ideas, of course, were to be looked for in the Bible. In it, the church represents love, or the bride—virtue or wisdom the bridegroom. Hence those expressions which our profane wits take for erotic poetry, but which in reality are the exact terms of the spiritual marriage, or rather of the union which exists between the Love of man, and the Intellect from above which makes it fruitful. The union of two parties, one of whom possesses what the other wants, is called even in philosophical language an intellectual marriage. It is not surprising, therefore, to find this expression made use of in the Sacred Book.

Mr. Tessier.—That is very well for those images which recall a chaste marriage; but what of those disgusting expressions which only represent debauchery and prostitution?

Mr. Lanoue.—If there be a harmonious fusion between all that is good and true, the evil and false which destroys or adulterates this fusion exactly represents adultery. In the Divine Word this word likewise is frequently met with. Thus, false doctrines and the churches which propagate them are called harlots. Hideous passions are there represented by emblems borrowed from the scenes of impure love, as the pure affections take for their symbols the graceful pictures of true conjugal union. And viewing the matter in its true light there are no other emblems. It is the different nature of the union between the sexes which is the great test of all our moral affections. There is man and woman in everything which has life above, as here below. Woman is not woman solely by her physical constitution, which differs from that of man but by her affections; man is man by his intellect. Thought and affection are the two sexual elements in the entire moral creation. When these two elements of life are conjoined in the good and true, it is a celestial marriage. When they are united in the false and evil, it is an infernal marriage.

Mr. Tessier.—What profound metaphysics! I took these expressions for simple metaphors of somewhat bad taste; but how much you elevate the subject! I believed that the animal nature alone could dwell with delight on the idea of the divine spouse of whom the Scripture speaks, but it seems there is lofty philosophy in this expression. If there be, as you say, man and woman—or, in other words, love and understanding—in everything that has life, I now see that the

Church, looking for God with all her love, may be well compared to a woman, and that the God who enlightens her must represent the intelligent principle, which is really of masculine origin. This signification of the first terms being once adopted, the union which takes place between the two must be regarded as a marriage. That is not difficult to conceive.

Mr. Lanoue.—And add that this spiritual marriage had necessarily to take as its emblem and expression everything which relates to natural marriage. Those who feel shocked at these similes only prove their ignorance of the very nature of moral things, and of the ancient traditions which prove and support them. Whenever the earthly functions of man are referred to by extatics, we must always understand them in the figurative sense. Thus, the earthly food of man means when used by them, as it does in the Eucharist, the spiritual food of the mind and heart. To eat, means to appropriate to one's self the divine good; for the spiritual man does not himself furnish the principle of life—he receives it elsewhere. Like the physical man he repairs the waste in his substance. To drink expresses the action by which the intellect quenches its thirst at the fountain-head of truth.

Mr. Tessier.—It is vulgarly said in this country—"Believe that, and drink water;" which signifies that, when you believe a foolish thing, it is as if you drank water. Drinking, therefore, is in some degree synonymous with believing.

Mr. Lanoue.—The flesh of man, which represents the foundation of his physical nature, is the evident type of that immaterial love which, much more justly than the flesh, is said to be life itself.

Mr. Tessier.—Thus, when God calls on us, in the prophets, to eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of horsemen, he does not invite us to a repast of cannibals; he tells us simply to appropriate to ourselves the love of such persons.

Mr. Lanoue.—Without doubt. The flesh of kings means the love of those who are in the truth, and the flesh of horsemen the love of the intelligent. You have already seen that the horse is a symbol of the understanding.

Mr. Tessier.—Granted, as regards the horsemen; but what have kings in common with truth?

Mr. Lanoue.—A king directs public affairs, as truth directs all that refers to man. Love, as we have said, is blind; it is the understanding which guides it. The understanding, therefore, or truth, of which it is the seat, may be taken for the conducting faculty. All philosophers, besides, are agreed on this point. It is in this same sense that Jesus Christ tells us that we are to eat his flesh and drink his blood. In so doing he recommends us to nourish ourselves with the elements of

his moral being, love and wisdom, in their essence. In this manner, you may read all the prophets fluently.

Mr. Tessier.—How many enigmas may be solved by this interpretation!

Mr. Lanoue.—As the human soul can only be conceived by extatics under the form of the man-spirit, it cannot be considered without a reference to motion. Its forms have a necessary signification. The directions which it takes have another still. Its march represents the progress of the Spirit. If it ascend, it is towards spiritual life; if it descend, it sinks into the infernal abyss. The angel of heaven feels as if he descended from heaven; the angel of darkness as if he ascended to the light.

Mr. Tessier.—It results from this that the terms above and below, which cannot represent heaven or hell upon the earth, are correct expressions in the visions of the seers.

Mr. Lanoue.—There is nothing, even to the elements themselves, which has not its fixed signification. The earth, with all that it produces, represents human society with its actions, and it is from these actions alone, in fact, that the earth assumes any value in the eyes of the Eternal. When the Bible says that the earth is barren, it means to say that the human race is devoid of virtue. The earth, therefore, everywhere represents the universal church; the air, the throne of the invisible God; the breath is the emblem of intellectual life; fire, as we have already seen, is the emblem of that divine Love which we ourselves call divine fire; and, lastly, water, which is opposed to the solidity of the earth, the representative of Good, is from its mobility an emblem of Truth, which assumes a different complexion and form in every individual. The limpid mirror, in fact, reflects the sky, whether it be serene or covered with clouds, just as the understanding makes a truth for itself from the impression which it receives.

Mr. Tessier.—Thus all serious objections to the Bible are removed; and until I receive another and a better key, I shall be content with the one you have given me. All the objections of the sceptics turn on the physical impossibility of the things which they will not admit. This physical impossibility I acknowledge with all my heart; but the absolute impossibility I deny. I have thus, therefore, a satisfactory explanation of everything which has been a stumbling-block to the Atheists, the Deists, and the Encyclopædists. Furnished with this explanation, I laugh at the objections of those who propose to calculate if the ark could contain all the animals of the globe, pair by pair; who ask if the wolf could remain quiet by the lamb, if the fly could enter with impunity into the web of the spider; for if the carnivorous animals did not

eat their neighbours, they took no food at all, and consequently must have starved.

Mr. Lanoue.—You might fill an entire volume with the inconsistencies which would follow from this narrative if taken in a literal sense. You may ask if Noah knew all the animals, for there are to this day multitudes with which our naturalists are not acquainted. You have a right to inquire what time was necessary to assemble all this heterogeneous company. Many years would not have been sufficient ; and yet there are animals that are born and die in a single day. On the other hand, picture to yourself the human race swallowed up in a sea of stormy passions and in the restless billows of their thoughts. A single individual preserves his heart from these corruptions. This heart, the abode of sentiments which alone are worthy of being preserved by God, is the ark ; the animals represent the affections which find a refuge there. Do we not say, even in the present day, that the lamb is an emblem of innocence and the dove of purification ? The affections of which these animals are emblems—these were the guests of the man of God !

Mr. Tessier.—You overwhelm me, Mr. Lanoue, with your explanations. How natural ! I wish all the world heard you ; it would surely become Christian like myself. It is only mysteries of that kind, Mr. Lanoue, which shock well-regulated minds. Your idea of a primitive language is the most philosophical that I have ever met ; and it would be better to put in the margin of the Bible your explanation of the ark than that which I find in mine, where the credulous editor has attempted to measure the ark of Noah, in order to prove that there was room enough in it for all the animals. As to the provisions necessary for their support, he does not say a word. If he had been a military commissary, he would have seen that it would have required many arks to feed an army of that description. It follows from this, that the animals created in the first chapter of Genesis were only typified affections.

Mr. Lanoue.—Without any doubt. The beginning of moral life in man is represented by vegetables, since these are placed on the lowest step of the ladder of life. When a more lively faith comes to enlighten him, the productions of his thoughts are compared to the fish of the sea and the birds of the air. Lastly, when warmed by true life, his affections are symbolized by the beasts of the earth.

Mr. Tessier.—One would say that the author of Genesis was acquainted with the scale of beings, which I believed to be a discovery of our own naturalists. I recollect having read in the Prophets that the Lord had formed an alliance with the fishes, the birds, and the beasts of the field. It is

very clear that this can only be explained by your theory; for God cannot make any real alliance, except with the thoughts and affections of man. But tell me, how does it happen that the creation of man did not take place till after all this? That is rather perplexing.

Mr. Lanoue.—Not the least in the world. Until then man had only been warmed and enlightened by God in those degrees which take for their emblems the figures of animals. When he became completely spiritual, God then said: "Let us make man in our own image:" which signifies, with all possible exactness, that it was not until the moment when he reflected his Creator in himself that he was truly man, that he was truly created. In fact, while the regeneration remains incomplete in man, he does not bear the stamp of his Creator. That is too evident to require a lengthened consideration.

Mr. Tessier.—The animals being the symbols of our affections, those which were offered as sacrifices by the Hebrews were no doubt these same affections typified.

Mr. Lanoue.—Before man can become regenerate, what are the sacrifices which he must make? Are they not his passions or affections?

Mr. Tessier.—Oh, Mr. Lanoue, how much this idea elevates the subject in my eyes! The fall explains the sacrifices, but you alone tell me what these sacrifices are. M. De Maistre, with all his intelligence, refers everything to blood—that shocked me terribly. Besides, has not Jehovah a hundred times said to the Jews that the smell of their holocausts was displeasing to him? How vain and empty now are the jests of those sceptics who ridicule the innumerable butcheries committed under the law!—and yet I used to know them by heart. Many a time have I argued about them with the principal people of our town, and none of these could do anything but laugh, and go to mass notwithstanding.

Mr. Lanoue.—In the eyes of extatics animals have always been the emblems of human thoughts and affections. It is for this reason that you see them play so important a part in fable, which may be looked upon as a distorted fragment of the knowledge given us by primitive revelation.

Mr. Tessier.—That is another difficulty the less for me. In fact, I never could reconcile myself to the idea of regarding mythology as an invention. Who could possibly have invented all these tales? But looked upon as facts misrepresented, their origin is quite intelligible. We can thus account for the metamorphoses of men into animals and plants. These were simply men whom the ancients represented by the natural emblems of the moral qualities, and subsequent generations took these figures for actual beings. How simple this explanation is!

Mr. Lanoue.—It is in the same way that the human thoughts and affections have been inscribed upon the most ancient book of nature ; I mean the starry vault. This is why the constellations do not take the form of straight or curved lines, as they would have done if the sphere had been the work of astronomers. But being the work of extatics, these seers adapted the images they saw to the celestial phenomena, which are thus the necessary symbols of spiritual phenomena. This theory, by the way, successfully refutes Dupuis.

Mr. Tessier.—Since we have come back to Dupuis, let us settle his affair at once. This is the way he explains the matter : The ancient eastern nations adopted the dogma of two principles : one of good, the other of evil. One was God, the other the Devil. Wise men inculcated this fable on the people to restrain them by the influence of hope and fear ; while to themselves, they explained by this means the operations of nature. The genius of good, in their eyes, was the sun, which sheds upon the earth heat, light, and life. The genius of evil was the winter, which dispenses cold, darkness, and death. The celestial vault was thus covered with emblems explanatory of the struggle between these two principles. The genius of good had for its emblem the lamb, or the celestial ram, the first sign of spring. This was the Lamb which came to take away the sins of the world. The genius of evil had for its attribute the serpent, the autumnal constellation which announces the return of cold and darkness, or the dragon, placed as the antagonist of the sun at the very pole of the ecliptic. “The sun was so plainly the sole deity of these nations,” adds Dupuis, “that the fêtes celebrated in honour of the divinity perfectly coincide with the celestial phenomena. The birth of God at Christmas expresses the new course which the sun begins to take at the winter solstice. The sun is then born, like God, and at this very conjuncture the constellation of the Virgin rises on the horizon, holding a child in her arms, while in the meridian appears the nebulous *cradle*, placed in Cancer. In describing this aspect of the sky, we actually write the first chapter of the life of Jesus Christ. I do not speak of the three kings or magi, whom the people even in the present day, place in the constellation of Orion, then becoming visible in our hemisphere. I come to the feast of Easter, when the resurrection of the Saviour is celebrated. At this period the sun passes, in fact, from the southern hemisphere into the northern, and in so doing saves us from the winter. From that day, he sets no longer for our pole ; he passes the equator, and his resurrection is complete. It is in the middle of the month of August that the feast of the Assumption is celebrated, and it is at this period also that the sun, entering into the sign of the celestial Virgin, absorbs her in his fires.

The sun is accompanied by the twelve signs of the zodiac, as Jesus Christ is by his twelve apostles. Our Saviour is represented in the Apocalypse by seven stars, by a candlestick of seven branches, which are plainly emblems of the seven planets. It is in the season of fruits, that is to say in autumn, that evil is introduced into the world: it is in the spring that the redemption is effected." It must be confessed that these coincidences are well calculated to lead us astray. For my part, I have not found a single ecclesiastic, Roman Catholic or Protestant, who has successfully refuted this system. I entreat you, Mr. Lanoue, to examine the matter in detail: it is worth the trouble.

Mr. Lanoue.—You have admitted that physical light and heat signify truth and love. You have acknowledged that one may have been put for the other, and that the analogy between them is perfect.

Mr. Tessier.—No doubt. Heat may be very well put for love, or love for heat.

Mr. Lanoue.—Consequently the orb which dispenses heat may also represent God, who warms us with his love. There is nothing forced in this comparison. The ancients represented by the movements of the sun the relations of the deity towards man. They spoke in emblems; and what proves this beyond all doubt is the date of the celestial sphere itself. No one, not even Dupuis himself, has been able to refer its origin to historical times, properly so called. It goes back to the epoch of the primitive revelation—that is to say, an epoch when men spoke in emblems. Dupuis asserts that material nature was deified, and that this worship was concealed under a moral allegory. For my part, I maintain that spiritual nature was the object of worship, and that the physical phenomena served as its expression. Who is to decide between us? The date of the celestial chart, no doubt. I prove that at this period man only spoke the language of correspondences, which denote the symbolical relations existing between the two worlds. It would be very astonishing if all the monuments, all the books of this epoch were sacred hieroglyphics, and if the vault of heaven, the most ancient book of all, were not one also. After all, common sense alone must decide in this matter. Let us take it as umpire. I maintain that the evil which has been introduced into the world is a moral evil, figured in the sphere by the constellation of autumn. Dupuis affirms that the only evil which has ever existed in the world is the cold that this constellation brings with it, and that, in order to deceive the people, an imaginary moral evil was invented. Good sense is revolted at such a proposition, and decides the matter in my favour, as you will yourself do without doubt.

Mr. Tessier.—Assuredly; it would be absurd to say that there is no evil but the winter, no other sin committed by man than eating apples which ripen in autumn! It would be ridiculous to affirm that the only favour we have to expect from God is to see the sign of the celestial ram return in the spring season. As a figure it is very well; as a reality it is a finished absurdity. But tell me how it happens that the Jews found all that ready made among the Medes and Persians at the period of the Babylonian captivity.

Mr. Lanoue.—The primitive revelation, which was spread over all the East, had enlightened the Medes and Persians, as it did the Jews, and the latter only found their own faith again amongst the adorers of Mithra. Our learned men, from not being aware of this revelation, have all attributed to the Babylonian captivity a peculiar influence on the Jewish religion. With a little more enlightenment they would have seen, instead of an action exerted by conquerors on the conquered, a fusion of two revelations, each confirmatory of the other.

Mr. Tessier.—That is evident. Will you tell me now how it happens that religious dogmas were traced beforehand on the celestial chart? If the emblems and the reality were contemporaneous there would be difficulty in the matter, but I cannot explain how an emblem came to be traced three thousand years before the event.

Mr. Lanoue.—The Book of Isaiah, in like manner, announced, many centuries before the event occurred, that a virgin was to bring forth a son. The sibyl's books made the same prediction. You receive these prophecies without any repugnance.

Mr. Tessier.—No doubt; they were written by prophets or extatics.

Mr. Lanoue.—And those were likewise prophets or extatics who traced upon the sphere events which time has since realized. At the epoch at which these emblems were drawn, prophetic clairvoyance was very common, since, as we have proved, it was the primitive mode of perception. These extatics naturally introduced the Virgin and her son into their chart, as Isaiah did into his writings. Both are works composed by clairvoyants, so that we must not be surprised if they resemble each other.

Mr. Tessier.—In fact, Mr. Lanoue, until I am informed of the date when the sphere was created, until it is proved that it took its origin in any period mentioned in history, I shall be satisfied with your explanation. It is quite as natural to conclude that the life of the Saviour was represented by the movements of the sun in the ecliptic, as that the divine attributes of wisdom and love were typified by the orb which gives us light and heat. St. John says that the Word is the

light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world. If you agree with Dupuis you will refer this to the light of the sun; but if you coincide in my opinion, you will conclude with much more reason that it alludes to the divine truth which shines in our understandings. The effect of the solar rays upon our eyes is a very graceful emblem; but if it be asserted that this is all which God has given to man, I have no words to characterize such an absurdity.

Mr. Lanoue.—Many enlightened men, even the fathers of the Church, have seen the connexion which you here point out between the life of Jesus Christ and the astronomical phenomena; but their conclusion was, that the devil took pleasure in thus imitating beforehand the mysteries and ceremonies of the Christians. I think my explanation is rather more satisfactory.

Mr. Tessier.—Instead of the devil, read the prophetic spirit; for the Redemption was everywhere announced, in all its details, before it was realized. It would be very astonishing, therefore, if it were not announced in the great symbolical book, *par excellence*. Thus the Apocalypse itself, which I once considered as an actual picture of the astronomy of the days of St. John, is also a corollary of the primitive revelation.

Mr. Lanoue.—The Apocalypse, as we have said, is a history of the phases of the Church. You are aware that I understand by the Church whatever sets forth the relations which exist between man and God. These phases were traced beforehand, not only in the celestial chart, but also in all the cosmogonies. We find everywhere traditions of the lost age of gold, and the consequent triumph of the genius of evil, represented by a dragon or a prostitute; we find everywhere also the recovered age of gold promised under the emblem of a mystic city descending from heaven. The Apocalypse only presents us with these two great facts, surrounded with their accessory symbols. All cosmogonies speak of cities which are to be the dwellings of the elect. Plato himself, in the *Phædon*, represents heaven as a city whose form is twelve-sided, with twelve faces of different colours, just as the city of St. John has its twelve walls, composed of twelve kinds of precious stones. The Persians and Scandinavians have likewise mystical cities, unequivocal emblems of that state of peace which is to succeed to the troubles arising from the reign of evil and terror. The sphere has this universal history written upon it, because the first men made it the depository of those truths which most nearly concern the happiness of the human race.

Mr. Tessier.—What! Mr. Lanoue, is the question so simple? The Apocalypse is only a picture of humanity straying from

the right path, and conducted back to it by the principle of good and truth! It is the history of good changed gradually into evil, and of evil combated and finally overcome by good. This book, which people generally find so obscure, is only a picture of the destiny of man. It contains within it the elements of fable, philosophy, astronomy, and archæology, because the primitive revelation taught this great truth to man in a thousand different ways. Ah! how foolish I was when I looked on St. John, as well as Ezekiel and Daniel, as astrologers!

Mr. Lanoue.—Here is an irrefragable proof of the error of the partisans of Dupuis. An astrologer would have calmly composed his celestial scheme, and then rested on it tranquilly; but the mode of perception, in extatics, agitates and exhausts the whole human machine, as is attested by Daniel, who awoke quite prostrated from his visions. We must therefore admit something here beyond the calm philosophical observation of the stars. The sentiments and affections took a form or body in the eyes of the seers of whom we are speaking; and the works they have left us, whether written or pictorial, whether enshrined in the glowing pages of Isaiah or inscribed on the celestial firmament, are nothing more than the grouping together of these forms so as to express the struggle of evil against good, and the final victory of the latter. In the one case these truths were confided to manuscripts, which the care of the people chosen for this purpose have handed down to us; in the other, they blazed forth in that Great Book which will endure for ever. Dupuis himself acknowledges, in the second chapter of his explanation of the Apocalypse, that the sphere is the archetype of the invisible world, and that it possesses, in a material form, everything which the latter possesses intellectually. Those are his own expressions.

Mr. Tessier.—This confession puts an end to all disputation: we can no longer entertain any doubt on the subject. Your idea is not a mere hypothesis, since even its enemies acknowledge its probability. Oh, Mr. Lanoue, we ought to have had a short-hand writer to write our conversations! He would have written down all my nonsense, no doubt; but your explanations would have furnished materials for a book calculated to change the whole world. You should write such a book, I assure you; but, instead of merely addressing blockheads like me, you should converse with the learned by profession; you should give them scientific reasons for all that you have made me comprehend by plain common sense.

Mr. Lanoue.—I may perhaps write such a work; and if so, I should be able to adduce every monument of antiquity, every

system of sincere philosophy, as proofs of the truth of my positions. You would then see that I am not the only one holding such opinions. But we will speak of this lofty project afterwards.*

Mr. Tessier.—How satisfactory are these explanations! But how can people still cling to the literal interpretation of the Sacred Volume? Those who obstinately defend this system do not seem to perceive that mankind has been marching onward, and that their faith is out of date. For want of proper explanations, they will not abandon their prejudices; they retain what is taught by tradition respecting these mysteries, and the result is that the human race, instead of kneeling piously at the foot of the cross, overturn it, and hoist in its place their national colours, because these alone have life, inasmuch as they are emblematic of something which retains a hold on our affections, viz. our earthly interests. Ah! if we were only enlightened Christians, how rapidly would these interests of a day yield their place in our heart to those of eternity! These all pass away, but truth remains. This truth—the truth of to-day, of to-morrow, and of eternity—is what I wish for. After this life, which is fast leaving me, I long for another, and Jesus Christ alone can bestow it. Let us return to Him, Mr. Lanoue.

Mr. Lanoue.—I am quite willing. But do not calumniate patriotic sentiments, my dear friend; if there be some men base enough to love their country only because it secures their property and their repose, there are others who love it with devotion, and who, in case of necessity, would sacrifice their hearts' blood for it.

Mr. Tessier.—It is true; I was a little hasty.

Mr. Lanoue.—And observe that the law of charity, that divine love which regeneration teaches, is, like God himself, pure in proportion to its vastness. It inculcates first on the individual that he should love himself for the sake of others; it next teaches the family that they should labour for the good of their country; while even before ourselves and our relations, our country should hold the first place in our regards.

Mr. Tessier.—I confess that I was wrong, and I correct myself; I wish merely to say that, in our day, men, instead of being actuated by divine love, are influenced by no higher feeling than a sentiment of patriotism, praiseworthy in itself no doubt, but frequently only serving them as a pretext for pursuing their own interests whilst they affect to work for the public good. How many men love their country only because it affords them places! There are few who cherish

* This project will be carried out in the succeeding volumes of the series.—

disinterested sentiments on this point. They disguise their interests under the name of opinions, but the two things are identical; whilst on the contrary, it is so noble, so generous, to contend for an opinion which is antagonistic to one's interests.

Mr. Lanoue.—Like Regulus, who advised the senators to break off the peace with Carthage; and yet he knew that the peace once broken, his death-warrant was signed.

Mr. Tessier.—Try if you can discover many men of this stamp in the present day. But your observation has led us by degrees from our subject. The brief explanations you have given me, have thrown a flood of light on the enigmas of the Old Testament, the language of the prophets, and the sublime figures of the Apocalypse. I should wish however in addition for some information respecting particular expressions in the Gospel.

Mr. Lanoue.—I have now too much pleasure in hearing you, not to listen to you as long as you choose. You grow in earnest, Mr. Tessier, and you see clearly here a proof of what I told you, that when the heart grows warm the understanding is proportionately elevated.

Mr. Tessier.—The Gospel says the same thing: "Out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh." He who wrote, or rather dictated, that book knew all the wants of the human heart.

Mr. Lanoue.—Let us come to the explanations which you wish for.

Mr. Tessier.—Can you explain, then, what our Saviour meant when he said to the apostle, "Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my church?"

Mr. Lanoue.—The word Peter, or rock, in the sacred Scripture, signifies *the truth, the faith firmly established*. It is for this reason that the Church is often compared in Scripture to a rock. It is for this reason that sand, on account of its want of cohesion, represents instability. You recollect that in the parable, Jesus speaks of two houses, the one built upon the rock, the other upon the sand. It is easy to see that two doctrines are here represented.

Mr. Tessier.—It is beyond a doubt. But how comes the apostle Peter to be called by this name?

Mr. Lanoue.—He was at first named Simon, and Jesus gave him the name of Peter, precisely on account of the firmness of his faith. When the Messiah afterwards told him that on that rock he would build his Church, did he not say to him clearly: It is on a faith like yours, like that which has procured for you your name, that my doctrine shall rest?

Mr. Tessier.—In that case, everything is explained: Peter is the emblem of faith; consequently, the words of Jesus

Christ are not a promise made to an individual. And the keys of Paradise?

Mr. Lanoue.—The key is another emblem, but it belongs to the Saviour alone. Does not the Apocalypse tell us that to him alone belongs the key of David, which opens and no man closes, which closes and no man opens? It is plain that no promise was made to Peter in particular, since this apostle was afterwards called by the Saviour himself *a stone of scandal*. Thus, by his name he is at once the emblem of faith in good, and of faith in evil.

Mr. Tessier.—Stay a moment; there are other expressions. I used to be told that my sins were remitted by the priest, and that the priest had received from God the power of binding and loosing. My blood boiled at the bare idea. You say, on the other hand, that if a man wishes to be saved, he must reform and become regenerate; and what doctrine can be more plausible and more rational? But what do you say about the power of loosing and binding?

Mr. Lanoue.—It is a faith like that of Peter, beyond all doubt, that binds and looses. Whatever is done by this faith on earth, is immediately done by God in heaven; that is clear. But the transmission of this power from one individual to another is a mere chimera.

Mr. Tessier.—In fact, according to such a system, we should be regenerated by the action of others. Nay, more, we should be regenerated by order. The priest would, as it were, draw a bill of remission payable to the bearer, and this draft would be accepted in the other world! What a ricketty system is this! And all to avoid confessing that man himself establishes or interrupts his relations with God. He binds or looses himself by faith or scepticism. It is quite simple. As man is changed by religious reform alone, all means which dispense with this reform are monstrosities. To absolve the man who ought to purify himself, is absolute exorcism. Assist me, I entreat you, to escape from this difficulty, for I am dazzled and bewildered. I see plainly that your theory is the key to the Sacred Volume. The Scriptures contain nothing but those objects of which you give me the signification. They have been seen, you say, by extatics: excuse me, but I cannot bring myself to believe in a heaven filled with horses and chariots, lions and oxen, lambs and sheep.

Mr. Lanoue.—Does not your memory, when you are sleeping, likewise bring back all these objects before you?

Mr. Tessier.—That is a knock-down blow. Certainly the memory peoples the world to which I am carried by my recollections. But I should like to know with what objects a heaven would be peopled into which I should enter, leaving all memory behind. If the memory supplies the forms of

heaven, would there be nothing there without terrestrial life ?

Mr. Lanoue.—You wish to know what forms your thoughts and affections would take, if you no longer recollected those affections. Well, my dear friend, as in that case you would cease to think or feel, or, what is the same thing, as you would cease to recollect, you would see nothing which could remind you of existence. This is profound, but you are quite capable of comprehending me. The extatic does not see in heaven the primitive types of his thoughts, as Plato teaches ; but he sees the form or body which they took on earth. The object seen by him upon earth was the necessary expression of an idea ; when he was struck by this idea in heaven, he perceived at the same time the object by which, in his mind, it had been represented on earth.

Mr. Tessier.—In that case he did not find the forms of his thoughts in heaven ; on the contrary, he carried them thither, as we carry our impressions into the state of sleep. We may therefore consider heaven as something which has no form whatever.

Mr. Lanoue.—You may, by abstraction, suppose a God without form ; for in his inner essence, and without some sort of manifestation, we cannot, logically speaking, grasp the idea of God. Before man had peopled heaven, the latter, no doubt, was an immense void, the nature of which we cannot conceive. Before it can enter our mind, like God, by an idea, we must suppose it inhabited, and then the recollections of those who inhabit it supply us with its forms. In a word, heaven, prior to the creation, is to us something beyond the reach of thought ; subsequent to the creation, we conceive of it as a spiritual state into which intelligent creatures are admitted, carrying with them always the impressions which they have received in life. Though freed from our bodily senses, the images acquired by their means follow us in the future world, as they do in sleep. How refined soever the spiritual substance may be, it always retains in extasis something sensual, something of the body.

Mr. Tessier.—Bravo, Mr. Lanoue ! your religion recognises, at the same time, the incorporeal God of philosophy and the manifested God of revelation ; the immaterial heaven of the abstract thinker, and the heaven peopled with the recollections of life which we find in the traditions of all nations. I presume that since an extatic of the present day sees objects on the earth different from those which were to be seen in the days of Isaiah, he would consequently see different emblems in the spiritual state.

Mr. Lanoue.—You may add that, by the power which man possesses of communicating his thoughts to another in the state of extasis, he would not only see, but could make

others see, these emblems. It is in this manner that children, who die before the age at which our senses convey impressions to us, receive no doubt in the future state those which are inculcated on them. In that imposition of hands which produces extasis, the person who receives the influence identifies himself with the very thoughts and images of him who operates.

Mr. Tessier.—What an immense and varied heaven must result from the action and reaction of beings upon each other! But, to return to our subject, the emblems and figures, or, if one may use the term, the dictionary of the sacred Scriptures, is altogether local, and must necessarily be so. The Hebrew prophets speak unceasingly of Moab, Idumea, Egypt, Assyria, just as a prophet of our own country would speak of England, Italy, and Spain; and yet it is not the less true that these words have a fixed signification. I have nothing more to ask you. Your theory of forms seen in the other world, and employed as emblems in the sacred books, gives to a subject in itself religious, a character which may be appreciated by a careful study of man. We thus obtain a correct idea of the other world, without allowing ourselves to become the sport of flattering illusions. In every other doctrine there is an impenetrable abyss placed between the things of heaven and those of earth; yours is like Jacob's ladder, by which we can ascend to heaven. This theory is as profound as it is probable. But speaking of Jacob's ladder, I confess I never could understand why the patriarch saw angels ascending and descending. It seems to me that if a ladder were to aid us to ascend to heaven, we should have no great desire afterwards to descend: I should not like, Mr. Lanoue, to return to wallow in the mire of the earth after having been raised so high.

Mr. Lanoue.—The whole Bible is simply the history of the regeneration of man. Before we can become regenerate, our good affections, which are represented by the angels, must mount to heaven; but, in order that our reform may not be merely an act of contemplative enthusiasm or mystic love, we must descend upon the earth, in order to practise there what we have learned through the elevation of our minds to the Good and True. Works are the basis and essence of all religion: it is the divine love carried into action upon the earth which determines the nature of our reform. In mounting the steps of the ladder, we only acquire the means of rendering ourselves better; to be better in reality we must descend from the sublime heights of science to the practice of charity. You have been mounting Jacob's ladder with me, Mr. Tessier; you must now descend, in order that you may give your faith that life which it has not yet acquired. It is Love that

lends to intellect all its activity. If your mental acquirements be merely buried in your memory, if you do not apply them in the cause of charity, they form no part of your being; you have not appropriated them to yourself. There is no true regeneration but when the heart earnestly wishes what the mind recognises as good. It is then that the latter passes into the life, as love and enthusiasm pass into the blood; it is then that we are warmed, reanimated by the celestial fire of which we become the recipients. You now possess the plan of salvation: it rests with yourself to practise the precepts of Him whose mission you can no longer doubt. You now look on redemption as a moral fact, the nature of which your conscience alone is sufficient to demonstrate; you see in it, besides, a doctrine which can sustain the closest examination, the most careful reflection. Love and knowledge unite to prove to you the truth of your religion, Mr. Tessier, but always give the preference to love. You will not be asked at the last day what you have known, but what you have done. Act then; you are no longer prevented from doing so by conscientious scruples. Do what you have been told to do by the Lord who redeemed you; and, in fulfilling his law, you will fulfil all the duties of an honest man. You have been presented with a complete view of the Religion at once of Good Sense and Good Works. I have proved to you that there is no virtue without religion; reverse the proposition and recollect that there is no religion without virtue. It is by virtue that religion is fortified and nourished. God is love. The essence of love, we have often said, is not to love one's self, but to love beyond one's self. You are the image of God; imitate your principle, then; love beyond yourself, and love yourself also; love others, in order that the warmth of your soul may find something elsewhere to return it. Love without selfishness, and in observing this rule you will be virtuous. How could you slander your neighbour, how could you do him injury, if you loved him? How could you be an adulterer, if, when admiring beauty, you only find in your heart an invincible horror at the bare idea of sullyng its purity?

God has placed us in the world, that we may to some extent represent him there. Everything originally issued from him, everything ought to return to him again; but in order that everything may return to the Supreme Being, it must first be pure like him. Assist your brethren, then, to lay aside the vices which degrade them, that they may be worthy of assimilating themselves one day to Him who alone could say of himself that he was without sin. Aid them by your example and your alms. By earthly alms you may sustain your brother's life for a few days longer, and if this life have

been spent in crime he may be induced in this interval to change his course, and consecrate it to virtue. The wicked man has been left on earth only that he might have time for repentance. Give him bread, then, in order that this time may come for him, that the supreme justice may not take him in his present condition. He is a wretch wallowing in filth and pollution; aid him to rise. By spiritual charity, by endeavouring to penetrate his heart with the truths of religion, you will cultivate the soul of your brother, and render it worthy of being united to the soul of God. Let all your words and actions be precepts and examples. Employ this gift of speech which you have received from God in gaining over souls to him. As often as you make men happy, you will be happy yourself. Happiness is based on benevolence alone, every other path to it leads us astray. The thirst for knowledge is like that of Tantalus, always burning and never appeased. The repose which virtue procures is accompanied by enthusiasm, but it is never followed by trouble.

Mr. Tessier.—Ah, Mr. Lanoue, what a searching manner you have of making me feel my errors! You inspire me with emulation in the cause of good, and not in the idle pursuit of knowledge alone. To acquire the truth of Christianity, I plainly perceive that the principal point is not to be able to repeat a scientific jargon, but to act and practise. In fact, I see that it is the practice of virtue which alone disposes us to hear the truth. If we listen to the truth only through curiosity, we ask the question which Pilate put to our Saviour, and like him we go away without awaiting the reply. If we hear it by accident we forget it; while virtue, on the contrary, can never forget the truth, for Virtue seeks truth out only that she may turn it to account.

Mr. Lanoue.—When a man desires anything passionately, how he dreams of it! How firmly are his thoughts fixed upon it! A constant and ardent affection is the parent of enlightenment. The means of attaining to a perfect knowledge of any profession whatever is to ardently desire it; indifference acquires nothing. We make no progress in anything unless we pursue it with predilection. In a word, we never become skilful in any profession unless we love it. The skilful in religious matters, Mr. Tessier, be assured, are those who love virtue; there is no exception to this rule. Knowledge without love is a body without a soul. We must begin by loving, in order that we may learn better afterwards. We acquire the truth in proportion to our desire of profiting by it.

Mr. Tessier.—It is absolutely necessary, therefore, to be virtuous before we think of going to seek for the truth. See what effect it produces on those worthless fellows who hear it every day repeated by the wise: they shrug their

shoulders and pass on. They are carried away by a love diametrically opposed to that of the good. If you persuade them on the contrary in the first place to bridle their depraved affections, they will then naturally return to the true path. I am the more pleased with your exhortation, that a certain cloud was already beginning to darken my mind. We had risen into such lofty regions in our search for the key to the Sacred Volume, that I almost believed it was necessary to be an extatic in order to become a Christian. I now see more clearly. The Scripture itself, literally taken, contains all the precepts necessary to enable us to lead a religious life. Our heart finds everything in it which it requires; but, in order that the intellect may also meet with its proper sustenance, the book must be explained by means of a doctrine. Inasmuch as the Bible was written by extatics, it can be understood only by means of the doctrine furnished by an extatic: that is quite natural. The key which you have given me is such that it cannot be found by unassisted reason; and this must be so, for it is a characteristic of divine books to be above the grasp of human reason. But at the same time, this key is of such a nature, that, when once offered to human reason, the latter can comprehend it and apply all its faculties to it, and this second characteristic stamps with an ineffaceable mark whatever comes from God, whatever is founded on the universal nature.

Mr. Lanoue.—My task is over, Mr. Tessier; you can now go on your way unassisted. Do you now see whither your curiosity was leading you? You were only accumulating doubt upon doubt. Did you ever expect to arrive in this manner at conviction? If so, you were greatly in error. I pointed out the danger, but you would not believe me. The eye, says the Scripture, is never wearied of seeing, nor the ear of hearing. The means of satisfying your intellect is not to give it nourishment crumb by crumb, but to detach yourself from self-love; then you will love with all the strength of which your nature is capable, and love will elevate the intellect with it into those regions where you will be too deeply convinced to admit a shadow of doubt. The clouds will be beneath your feet, and you will never feel a wish to look below. You will soar aloft: who will be able then to persuade you that you do not feel and see clearly? Our intellect creeps on step by step, and believes that the limits of each horizon that opens before it is the boundary of the world. Alas! it only fatigues itself in a vain and endless search. Love, on the contrary, is calm and peaceful; and, pillowed thus on the bosom of its God, it finds everything it can wish for. You feel anxious, you say, to be convinced of Christianity by all possible reasons. You wish that your understanding should be satisfied, and before

that can be done, all your objections must be removed. Well, confine yourself to this mode of argument : Christianity exists in the present day ; it existed before me, before my father—it must have had some origin. Consequently, Christ has existed, and Christianity dates from him. This Christ, about whom you no longer entertain any doubt, has told you to struggle against your propensities. If you wish to believe what he tells you, you have nothing to do but to follow his precepts. If you feel that you become better by combating your propensities, if you feel a new love supplant that selfish affection which even you yourself condemned, is this not a proof that Christ has told you the truth ? And if he has told you the truth, what more can you desire ? This cannot be denied. Whether he lived in such or such a way, whether his disciples did such or such things, does not concern you. These are not the essential points, they are merely accessories which are not indispensable. You wish, you say, not to fall into error. I approve highly of such a wish. But, examine if you are deceived in doing what the Gospel demands. If you find that you reap peace and happiness from such a line of conduct, you will be an inconsistent man if you do not acknowledge its truth. Again, you stamp yourself as a frivolous man who only exercises his mind and hushes the promptings of his heart, if, instead of pausing there, you perplex yourself with a multitude of questions useless to your happiness, and which, by your own acknowledgment and your own experience, do not prove to you in the least the truth of the doctrines of Christ, and the reality of that life which he has come to substitute in place of yours.

As he concluded, Mr. Lanoue abruptly withdrew, to escape the thanks which Mr. Tessier was ready to pour forth, and to allow time for solitary reflection to complete the work which he had begun. For Mr. Tessier's kind teacher hoped that he had led him back to the God whom he had lost, and when God is present, human learning has only to be silent.

TWELFTH CONVERSATION.

RELIGION IN WORKS.

MR. LANOUE believed the education of Mr. Tessier completely finished, and was therefore much astonished to see him return at a very early hour on the day following that on which the previous conversation, which he had supposed was the last, had taken place. "Mr. Lanoue," said he, on arriving, "I have been thinking all night on the means of commencing a new life, but I must inform you of the difficulties I meet with. I comprehend all your doctrine; but when I begin to think of putting it in practice, you have led me to look at it in such a general point of view that the details escape me, and with them the means of putting it in execution."

Mr. Lanoue.—And yet it is not difficult to do so. Love your neighbour I have repeatedly told you, love others without calculation and without selfishness, and in this manner all that you love will be good.

Mr. Tessier.—It is because it is so simple that my stupid mind loses itself in the details. There is a multitude of circumstances in life, in which I do not well see how these precepts are to be applied, and if you do not aid me a little, although I am thoroughly penetrated by the truth of Christianity, I am afraid I shall not be the more a practical Christian for that. I feel that the application is what determines the value of a theory, and if my principles are worth anything, they must form the bases of all the circumstances and actions of my life.

Mr. Lanoue.—In loving good you will never be mistaken. Religion, without charity, is a tree without fruit, and you know that Jesus has told us that such a tree is only fit to be cut down and cast into the fire. St. Paul, whom you have diligently studied, tells you that without charity he himself would have been only a tinkling cymbal, and yet St. Paul was a very learned man. Charity is therefore the only thing which you have to acquire. The Scripture warns you that, should you even do miracles in the name of Jesus Christ, he would say to you, notwithstanding, if you have not charity: "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity!"

Mr. Tessier.—That is precisely what afflicts me; for beginning to reflect during the past night whether I ought to assist an unfortunate spendthrift of my acquaintance, I at first said: No, for I should thus only enable him to do evil; on second thoughts I said: Yes, for I have no right to see the mote in

my brother's eye, when I have a beam in my own. I was almost inclined to decide the question by drawing lots, but since you have the goodness to hear me, I am glad that I have come to consult you.

Mr. Lanoue.—The word charity signifies love. Thus love, with a view to good, is charity. To make the matter clearer, you know that when I say good, I mean God. What you have already learned from me serves as a foundation for your faith, but faith can no more exist without charity, in the true Christian, than there can be light from the sun without heat. The doctrine of faith alone may be aptly represented by light without heat, and what would light alone produce on a cold and ice-bound earth? There must be in the heart of every man a love proportionate to the truth by which he is enlightened.

Mr. Tessier.—That is my own condition. Conviction has reached with me to the extent of love; but as love when blind is of no value, I hope you will put me in the way of acquiring an enlightened charity. Must I give away all that I have? how am I to give it? to whom? and according to what rules?

Mr. Lanoue.—It is not the gift in itself which constitutes charity; it is the motive that prompts it. If you give a poor man anything to get rid of him, if you found an hospital in order that your charity may be spoken of, if you endow a church that you may receive in exchange a number of masses to abridge your time of expiation —

Mr. Tessier.—Oh, I feel that in these cases I should give alms only from impatience, pride, or self-interest. What I do for an individual or society should not be done for myself, but for the greatest possible good of that individual or that society.

Mr. Lanoue.—If you wish any one well sincerely, and from the bottom of your heart, even although your position may not permit you to aid him with money, it is still charity, though the work is wanting; for if, in evil, the intention, as you said, is taken for the deed, so in love also the intention stands in place of the action. A real desire to do good is love. Alms do not therefore constitute the whole of charity; they are only the expression of it in certain cases. If the simple desire to do good is charity, you can understand that sincerity in our words and integrity in our actions are likewise charity. A soldier is charitable when he fulfils his duties, although he distributes no alms; a farmer or a sailor is also charitable in conscientiously filling the posts assigned to him by Providence. The soldier defends his country, the farmer feeds it, the sailor enriches it by commerce; all these, by services rendered to the public cause, fulfil the divine law, if they are animated by the love of their profession.

Mr. Tessier.—This is a very convenient sort of charity : it is simply the love of one's profession. I do not see that our neighbour gains much by that.

Mr. Lanoue.—There is no profession which is not profitable to the great family of man ; and if in exercising some particular profession, a man appears to do nothing for his neighbour in an individual point of view, be sure that he pays his debt to his neighbour *par excellence*—I mean to the great human family. The love of our neighbour, Mr. Tessier, is not confined to the individual : it extends first, as I have said, to our family ; from this it reaches our country ; then to humanity ; and finally to the universal community of all good men upon earth. The farther our neighbour is removed from direct contact with us, the more value our charity has. If confined to ourselves our charity is feeble and lifeless ; our family demands more, and our country a still higher degree. Charity is practised when we render ourselves useful in our profession, and when we consider as of primary importance the good which results from this profession to the entire community.

Mr. Tessier.—Thus, Mr. Lanoue, a ship-carpenter is charitable when he builds a vessel destined to bring the natural productions of one country to another, and to establish a communication between nations separated by the ocean ; a banker, who puts money in circulation in order that he may gain some for himself, is also charitable ; a merchant, who purchases certain commodities at a low price in one country, to sell them dearer elsewhere, is also charitable ; that is all very fine, but it is a pity that money has so much to do with this sort of charity.

Mr. Lanoue.—Money is indispensable, in order that the children of the carpenter, the banker, and the merchant may be reared by the fruit of their parents' industry, and become capable one day of filling their place ; it is also indispensable to enable these persons to continue the exercise of a useful profession.

Mr. Tessier.—But men are so little inclined to detach themselves from their private interests, that your fine charity, at the bottom of which there is always money, will appear to them only a romance. Talk to them of the charity of a ship-owner, who dispatches a vessel to the East Indies for his own profit, and you will see how he will laugh in your face !

Mr. Lanoue.—And yet even in this action charity may be the impelling motive. There are people who sometimes lose in their enterprises, and who persevere nevertheless from a sense of honour. A workman may undertake a task from vanity, which promises him little emolument. If pride and vanity are sometimes victorious over the love of gain, in actions which have not personal advantage for their object, why

should not a love superior to these petty passions succeed in accomplishing as much as they?

Mr. Tessier.—You are right, and taking myself as an example, I can conceive that I might still continue to work from pride when no longer obliged to do so from necessity. What we do naturally from vanity, we may do with effort from virtue. Besides, when we wish to praise an honourable man of any profession whatever, do we not always say of him that he prefers the public good to his private interest; that he works, in a word, for a higher object than money? I know that man does not always deserve the eulogiums he receives; but since this virtue is attributed to him, it must really exist.

Mr. Lanoue.—You are quite correct, and you also perceive where charity ceases in the exercise of our profession. If the carpenter rejoices at making a work useful to his brother men, if he feels how delightful it is to be a useful member of society, his charity is accepted by God; but if, caring little whether his vessel rot in the dock-yard or pursue a useful course over the waves, provided he has filled his darling money-bags, his only treasure, the charitable man disappears, and the miser is revealed. It is the same thing with the merchant. If he reckons up with pleasure in his mind the numerous families which his commerce supports; if he feels warmed and elevated at the thought of the service which he renders to his fellow-men; if neither pride nor ostentation finds an entrance to his heart, the merchant possesses the most unequivocal charity. But if his strong-box be the only object of his industrious activity, let him seek his recompense in his hoards of coins; it is useless to look for it elsewhere.

Mr. Tessier.—Ah! what a noble feeling is this love of our neighbour, Mr. Lanoue! and what a small matter is a few pence given to the poor, compared with an entire life devoted to a labour which has the greatest possible good of the greatest possible number for its object! If every one were charitable in this manner, in his own sphere, how grand would the result be! But you have done well to speak to me of charity only in the last place: in fact, it cannot exist until after Regeneration has commenced. But for the latter, selfishness would always make the scale incline towards the money-chest.

Mr. Lanoue.—Without doubt. This is why regeneration has the Christian life for its object. Our neighbour is he who is nearest to us; and considering the matter in this light, you see that by the laws of self-denial we should place the good itself in the first rank, and our own person in the last. In this way it issues from God, who is the Good; extends itself first over humanity, where God is in the greatest number; then to our native country, where the number is more restricted; from thence to the family, where there are only a

few receptacles; and finally into the man himself, who is only one.

Mr. Tessier.—In fact, the Gospel tells us to love God above all, and our neighbour as ourselves. God is justly named there first. It is precisely as you explain it.

Mr. Lanoue.—Charity is thus the love of good, acting without the hope of recompense or reciprocity. Its recompense is the sentiment by which it is animated; and is this not a sufficient one?

Mr. Tessier.—Ah, yes, Mr. Lanoue; how happy is the carpenter of whom I spoke, when he thinks that his ship will preserve so many brave people from the fury of the ocean! He builds it in the hope that it may be able to struggle against the waves, and annihilate the distance between countries separated by a barrier otherwise insurmountable. In short, he might regard it with a feeling of pride, if love were not a nobler and sweeter sentiment, when he thinks that it may continue to render services to the human race even after his death. An architect, in seeing the house which he has constructed, may feel fired with the love of his fellow-men for whom he has procured an asylum, and in that case his profession itself is charity. A blacksmith may say the same of the shovel which he sells to the poor labourer; and the farmer also, of the grain which he sows to sell again for food. Ah! how pleasing it is to make our life one long act of charity! In short, Mr. Lanoue, though I feel such pleasure in your conversation, I am tempted to run away to my daily pursuits, in order that I may thus be charitable.

Mr. Lanoue.—You are not less so, Mr. Tessier, in listening to me for your edification, so that you may be able to instruct others in your turn. A thirst for truth is not one of the least necessities of man; and if you come to the aid of your brethren who languish in doubt and uncertainty, you are not less charitable with regard to them, than if you gave them a garment to protect their bodies from the inclemency of the weather. They are men whom you make happy by imparting to them a principle which fortifies their souls, and brings them nearer to God, the essence of good.

Mr. Tessier.—Thus a friend who converses with a friend, does an act of charity by telling him the truth.

Mr. Lanoue.—Does he not give him, in fact, something more precious than all the treasures of the world?

Mr. Tessier.—Oh, yes, Mr. Lanoue, that is the plain truth. You have been very charitable with me, but —

Mr. Lanoue.—But take care; just as the exercise of our profession or business leads to the love of money, which destroys all charity when it is the object of our efforts, so those who expound the truth to others may readily destroy them-

selves by pride. They may say to themselves: "It is I who have enlightened this man; what a mass of knowledge have I not discovered by my intellect! what a high idea will he not form of me!" In that case, there is no longer charity. Man is only a recipient of truth, and we must acknowledge that God is its source, that it is He who has spoken by our mouth.

Mr. Tessier.—We must render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's. But is the good which I do inspired by God alone?

Mr. Lanoue.—No doubt. After having acted with the utmost ardour, you will acknowledge, on reflection, that it was God alone who acted in you. Man believes himself the possessor of physical life, and yet the simplest reflection is sufficient to demonstrate to him that he is only its organ. It is the same with our moral nature. We should act as if we were the authors of the good that is in us; but unless we are blinded by an insensate pride, we cannot avoid acknowledging that it comes from God alone.

Mr. Tessier.—But if man is a mere receptacle, and the divine influence operates everything within him, he has only to await it patiently, and it will assuredly come; he will then do good by merely obeying this impulsion, as the weathercock serves the mariner by simply obeying the wind.

Mr. Lanoue.—God has given man the faculty of acting completely by himself, as well in a moral as in a physical point of view. That man may not be deceived by pride, God demands that he shall recognise, after the fact, that as the life which circulates in his corporeal members was not produced by him, so in like manner he did not create the soul which has descended into his moral faculties, and fired him with love and enthusiasm. This is so true, Mr. Tessier, that we always say of a man who makes himself an enthusiast, no matter in what way, that he is not so in reality. To attain to anything in the moral world, it is not necessary to make one's nature: we have simply to manifest the nature we have received. I proved that to you before. The man who attempts to govern the sentiment with which he is animated, possesses none at all. We cannot make a soul for ourselves; we only exhibit the soul which God has placed in us. This conduct of Providence towards us is designed to promote our union with itself. If man were the cause of his own life, he would be God; but although simply animated by God, he must have the faculty of acting as if he were independent of him, that he may reunite himself to his principle. In this way, reciprocal love is established between the creature and his Author. God is received and loved by a being different from himself; and this being, deriving everything from the Deity,

brings back to Him the sentiments he received, which have assumed an individual hue and character in him, but which he acknowledges that he owes to God.

Mr. Tessier.—Ah! that is very difficult, Mr. Lanoue. You mean to say that God, when dwelling in our hearts, does not wish it to be his house, but ours. It is *our* duty, after having arranged and purified it for his reception, to say to ourselves: It is God, not I, who speaks so well and feels so sincerely within this heart. By this means, in fact, God is loved by another being than himself. This is the only means of explaining the action of God towards his creatures. But let us return to charity, which is more easy to comprehend.

Mr. Lanoue.—And to practise; for this condition of mind in which we refer everything to God and attribute nothing to ourselves but evil, is one of the most difficult things to produce. Without that, charity itself is nothing.

Mr. Tessier.—And, in fact, I can conceive that there is so great a charm in considering one's self the benefactor of mankind, each according to his peculiar capacity and occupation, that if the heart does not return thanks to God for it, we mingle selfishness with our pleasure, and every man is almost tempted to believe himself a little god in his petty sphere. Oh! this is a robbery committed on the true God: we should take care of that. Observe, then, how I was about to lose myself in those pretty soliloquies I imagined the ship-builder to hold about his vessel.

Mr. Lanoue.—Let him continue to hold these soliloquies, if he say afterwards: I am merely an instrument of love; it is thus that I am a fellow-worker with God. His breath, which animates all the universe, passes through different channels to accomplish its action; I am one of these channels.

Mr. Tessier.—It would be more noble and equally just if he said that he was one of his representatives, one of his ambassadors; and even thus man has a sufficiently strong stimulant to induce him to do good. How happy will he not be to become a fellow-worker with God! To assist God! Do you not feel how delightful, how ennobling this idea is? How sure we then are of not being mistaken! And when we resign our spirits to him at death, we can say with confidence, "Lord, see what we have done with the life thou hast given us! Thy love has not remained dormant within us!"

Mr. Lanoue.—And the Lord will reply, "Much shall be given to him who has loved much."

Mr. Tessier.—Oh! Mr. Lanoue, thanks for so delightful a prospect. I confess that the practice of your religion is still more easy than its principles. Your life of charity is a sabbath: we have only to exclaim from our hearts, "Glory be to God!" This plan for uniting man to God is as far superior to

that of the Socialists as heaven is above the earth. The Socialists attempt to bring about the union of the creature with the Creator in this life alone. You inculcate the same outward conduct as they do, but you inculcate it with a view to an inward and spiritual purpose—a union not only in this world but in the future. The Socialists bury you in the dust of the world. You, without disdaining this earth, link it inseparably with heaven. But what puzzled me at the beginning is not quite clear to me yet, viz. what am I to do with the spendthrift of whom I spoke to you? Shall I give him money, that he may abuse it? Shall I refuse it, in order to have a plausible pretext for not untying my purse-strings?

Mr. Lanoue.—There is a material or purely natural charity, and a moral or spiritual charity: the one, under the general name of almsgiving, consists in furnishing the first necessities of life to the indigent; that is to say, in giving him food and clothing, bread, soups when he is sick, warm garments when he is exposed to the inclemency of the weather. All this is necessary for the wants of animal life, without which spiritual life cannot exist; for the first is the basis upon which the second is established.

Mr. Tessier.—I understand that very clearly. It is by instructing and amending his heart that man brings about a real union with God; but, before this can be done satisfactorily, the body must be free from suffering, for there is no sound mind without a sound body. The simplest common sense proves the truth of your conclusions. Thus, I ought to feed and clothe the poor man by my alms, to enable him to work out his regeneration, for that is his great end and purpose.

Mr. Lanoue.—That is why it is necessary to accompany your alms with advice: this latter is spiritual charity. When you say to the poor man whom you assist, "Pray for me," say to him likewise, "Pray for yourself." If he is offended, as many are, by the word religion, inculcate in him the precepts of simple morality, and that will still conduct him to God.

Mr. Tessier.—Your double almsgiving is very attractive. I thought at first that your charity consisted entirely in carrying out the profession or employment with which we are occupied: in all that I perceived nothing like almsgiving, and I was shocked at your system; but now you have completely regained my confidence. This almsgiving is not selfish, but must be practised, I imagine, according to necessity.

Mr. Lanoue.—Without exercising prudence in dispensing your liberality, you run the risk of taking from the man who is poor from necessity, that you may give to him who remains poor by his own fault. In the latter case, charity consists in arousing this man from his voluntary sloth, or of assisting him to free himself from vices which lead him to be a burden

on the community. We must procure employment for the man who is in this position, and give him the means of instructing himself. To invest money in founding establishments for this purpose is an excellent mode of almsgiving.

Mr. Tessier.—But the man of whom I speak is not only a sluggard or drunkard, but a man who pollutes society with his vices.

Mr. Lanoue. - In that case you should not hesitate: charity obliges you to preserve society from a scourge which afflicts it. The judge who condemns a criminal to a just punishment, fulfils the charity demanded from him by his profession, which consists in taking thought for the public security. When you become aware that a crime has been committed, you should unhesitatingly deliver over the thief or the assassin to justice. If you fear to do so, lest you compromise yourself in the good opinion of the criminal, you sacrifice the general good to personal considerations, which is only at bottom a species of dissembled selfishness.

Mr. Tessier.—Now I see clearly. But you tell me that the judge is charitable, merely because he judges; the priest then is, no doubt, charitable merely because he exhorts his parishioners to virtue; the learned man, because he writes a useful book. A king is, consequently, charitable because he is a king; and a great lord because he is a great lord. I am a partisan however of a description of liberty, nay even of a religious equality, which is inconsistent with all this grandeur. Can a man be a liberal in your religion?

Mr. Lanoue.—Charity is the greater the wider it extends. If your liberality only goes so far as to enfranchise one class of citizens, it is a narrow system of judging; if on the contrary it leads you to regard humanity as one and the same body, of which God is the soul; if it extends so far as to make you look on all men as brothers, who, having the same father and a common origin, have a right to the same prerogatives, without any odious distinction of caste or birth, then, my dear friend, your liberality is the religion of the Gospel in all its purity and in its widest application. "Let the greatest among you be as the least," said Jesus to his apostles. That is what men should have constantly present to their minds. This heavenly charity is the true Republic, Mr. Tessier, a word which simply signifies the public good, that public good which should be always kept in view by a man deeply penetrated with the truth of the principles which I have made known to you.

Mr. Tessier.—Thus, your motto is, "Neither kings nor nobles." Bravo!

Mr. Lanoue.—No lazy king rather, whose privilege it is to receive the flattery and extort the money of his subjects;

no great lords having nothing to do but to gamble, hunt, debauch innocence, and deprave our manners by luxury and extravagance. But in every community there must be always chiefs and magistrates—what matters their name? The capacities of men are never equal. In an army there must always be soldiers and officers. In a nation there must be always labourers, artisans, merchants, and men occupied with the discussion and execution of the laws. The great lords will be the magistrates exercising the highest functions, and consequently those which are most useful and charitable. Whatever the name of the chief of your republic may be, for a king is only a magistrate, the most universal charity will be looked upon as an indispensable qualification for the exercise of his functions. If, learned and intelligent himself, he makes it his study to diffuse education throughout all classes; if he encourage commerce and industry, if science and religion flourish under his reign, you feel that this king has done more for the progress of charity than all the other functionaries of the state. Instead of uttering his name with hatred, or viewing his elevation with envy, you owe a debt of gratitude to his virtues.

Mr. Tessier.—You are right. I only joined in the general cry, and I was wrong. How foolish we are with our prejudices! But if a minister, one of our great functionaries, passes by, must I humble myself before him because it has pleased the king to make him a minister? A king, with a stroke of his pen, can make as many great lords as he likes, but it is beyond his power to make a single virtuous man.

Mr. Lanoue.—These great lords are men who have a much greater responsibility than you. They are not great by their titles, but by the functions they discharge. It is they who put in execution those laws which retain men in obedience. But for them human passions would know no restraint, society would fall into chaos. It is not from the honour attached to the office that we are to judge of that office; it is from its utility. Your rebellious envy looks on this nobleman only as one who occupies a more conspicuous position than yourself; you do not reflect that, as a magistrate who has more duties to perform, his charity is perhaps greater than your own.

Mr. Tessier.—Very true, if it be as you say; but I can scarcely believe in the charity of a king or a great lord.

Mr. Lanoue.—And yet, by your own confession, they are charitable if they fulfil their functions duly, and with a view to the public good. He who demands respect and honour on account of the position in which he is placed, is under the dominion of pride and not of charity.

Mr. Tessier.—It is very true: the Gospel says that the glory belongs to God alone.

Mr. Lanoue.—He who discharges the duties imposed on him by his office or profession, in the expectation of thereby receiving honours or dignities, prefers himself to others. The honour of the office does not belong to the person filling it, but to the office itself.

Mr. Tessier.—If this were not so, a king who was blind enough to believe that he concentrated the royal majesty in his own person, would resemble an ass laden with relics.

Mr. Lanoue.—La Fontaine has told you that

The robe alone our homage claims
When magistrates are scant of brains.

In this case, the robe is the emblem of the function. The king should place himself beneath the law: it is then alone that he reigns by divine right.

Mr. Tessier.—That puzzles me again. You say by divine right?

Mr. Lanoue.—Yes, by divine right. The law is the expression of justice; all justice, like all truth, proceeds from God alone. The king, then, or the head of the state, whatever he may be, who regards himself as the executor of the laws, may say that he reigns through and for the Deity, inasmuch as he looks on himself with good reason as a fellow-worker with Him. If you question this right, you contradict the light of common sense; nay, you neglect one of the first duties of charity. The entire public safety depends on the confidence which we feel in the legality of any function or office; you endanger this safety when you shake the confidence of others in it.

Mr. Tessier.—Ah! this divine right is admirable. But what if a king sets himself above the laws?

Mr. Lanoue.—He tramples justice under foot; he sets himself in the place of God; his reign is a usurpation. He no longer reigns by the divine right; he is a tyrant, who says, "The law is myself!" This is plainly stating that the law comes from him and not from God.

Mr. Tessier.—Now I can breathe more freely. I was afraid lest your religion might lead me to a blind obedience to absolute authority. I comprehend my duties clearly, and those of others too. To be charitable, I must be a good father and a good citizen; I must assist the poor, and contribute to the public improvement. I defy the most captious to make any objection to your morality. In a word, I ought to love my neighbour as myself.

Mr. Lanoue.—True, but always in proportion to the good that you find in him. If in loving your neighbour you love a friend who flatters you, an acquaintance who is agreeable or

necessary to you, you love yourself while appearing to love others ; on the contrary, you should love in others only the good which you find in them, independent of the advantages which you derive from them in your personal relations.

Mr. Tessier.—But this is rather too stoical, Mr. Lanoue.

Mr. Lanoue.—Less so than you think. It is according to the good which men produce, the services which they render, the enlightenment which they diffuse, that we usually esteem them. Well! put love in the place of esteem, and you have at once charity towards your neighbour. Say to yourself, “I ought to love men in proportion to the good and the truth which they contain, because he who has more of the divine in him has more of what is worthy of our love.”

Mr. Tessier.—I have not a word to say against that. The Socialists make religion merely a social tie: this sect, in fact, has undertaken to translate everything contrary to its true sense. In every place where God ought to be found they find nothing but man. Now you see man also, Mr. Lanoue, but only as a means and not as an end.

Mr. Lanoue.—Our neighbour, properly so called, is the man who possesses divine goodness and truth. These are the two qualifications which, without any doubt, ought to be the objects of our love. He who experiences and manifests them in himself is our neighbour, in the degree in which they exist, and according to their quality. In a word, as good is your object, the man who contributes to it is in your eyes the neighbour whom you ought to love. You are sensible that if charity consisted in loving all men without distinction, we should prefer the libertine and the rogue who show us attachment, to the virtuous man who is a stranger to us. Our neighbour should not be, in our eyes, merely one who loves us, but one who loves virtue.

Mr. Tessier.—To love what is good appears to me very easy, Mr. Lanoue; we have to wage no warfare to accomplish that.

Mr. Lanoue.—More than you think, perhaps, my dear neighbour. If you recognise certain qualities and virtues in another, you recognise them also in a certain degree in yourself; and I think you require to make some sacrifice before you can acknowledge that another is better than you are. I believe this charity to be very rare. We do not willingly acknowledge the superiority of others.

Mr. Tessier.—Yes, it is a great virtue to proclaim this openly and without dissimulation. To love and praise the goodness of a rival is by no means common. Men are naturally so envious and jealous, that we are annoyed to hear it continually said that another is better than ourselves.

Mr. Lanoue.—Like the Athenian peasant who voted for the

exile of Aristides, and who had no other reason to allege than that he was tired of hearing him called the Just.

Mr. Tessier.—If we are not to love those merely who please us, neither ought we to love our near relations for the mere purpose of centring in them that affection which nature gives us to diffuse amongst all who surround us.

Mr. Lanoue.—To love our kindred very often means to love ourselves. Our affections are sometimes so strictly limited to our own family, our interest is so concentrated on this one spot, that in bestowing our affection on our relations without observing the rule which I have laid down, we are purely self-seekers. In this way, our family may be said to enter into a league with us against society. We still substitute our individual advantage for the general good.

Mr. Tessier.—Precisely; we ought to offer the services of our family, like our own, to society; and a father who only loves his children because they are his, because they have the same interests to defend, because they perpetuate the glory of his name, and the honour of his family—such a father, I say, with all his tenderness, is not a good parent: he is a selfish man, who makes his children the tools of his selfishness, instead of leading them to exert themselves for the common good.

Mr. Lanoue.—Love good for its own sake, and you will never be mistaken.

Mr. Tessier.—But our social code insists that we should interest ourselves for our near friends and relatives in preference to strangers.

Mr. Lanoue.—Certainly; but only in so far as we render our charity subordinate to a useful end. I must think of the necessities of my relatives as of my own; but as I am prohibited to do anything for myself from selfishness or vanity, this rule should guide me as to the manner in which I am to conduct myself towards my family. Food, clothing, and instruction—these are the real wants of my relatives, as they are of other men. Whatever goes beyond this is most frequently mistaken benevolence.

Mr. Tessier.—But, after all, trifling presents are not prohibited; they serve to draw the ties of friendship closer.

Mr. Lanoue.—No doubt, when they serve a useful purpose; but to bestow superfluities which flatter pride or sensuality, merely because we think we should give to our friends rather than to others, is what I deny with all my strength. In this case, your presents actually injure your family instead of promoting their benefit.

Mr. Tessier.—But, Mr. Lanoue, if your doctrine were known, there would be none but virtuous people; nay, there would not be one of these who could give the slightest hold for ridicule. In fact, real and absolute good can never be

ridiculous. It might be said that your charitable men were very severe; but no one could laugh at them without at the same time condemning himself.

Mr. Lanoue.—We can only ridicule virtue by calumniating it, and then it is no longer virtue that we ridicule.

Mr. Tessier.—A certain philosopher regarded it as his highest merit that he had never, in the slightest degree, thrown ridicule on the most insignificant virtue. But, to return to your family charity, it is wonderfully similar to the doctrine of the Communists, which abolishes all inheritance; for, to deprive our relatives of their property during their lifetime or after their death, is pretty much the same thing.

Mr. Lanoue.—The law of inheritance is useful, inasmuch as it tends to the stability of society. Providence feeds the animals, but men are brought up by their fellow-men; and if a man, at his birth, does not find some resource prepared for him, he will run a great risk of perishing from hunger before he is in a condition to provide for his own wants. Property, therefore, belongs to families; the law of succession is founded on the law of Nature. We should not deprive our relatives of their inheritance; we should only take care that our bequests do not turn to their prejudice. Everything for the general good, and everything also for private good when this has the former as its end. The latter is the means, the former is the end; and the proverb says: Whoever desires the end desires the means.

Mr. Tessier.—After all, there is no need for so much explanation. Jesus himself said that his kindred and friends are those that do the will of God. There is your doctrine justified; no persuasion is necessary to convince us of what is self-evident. In loving men in proportion to the good which is in them, I love the good; in loving them in proportion to the services which they render me, my gratitude is merely the expression of my self-love. If we love the vicious man, it is clear that we love vice. To love others only because they share our tastes or flatter our passions, is not what is recommended us by that religion which tells us to love our neighbour. In fact, the good alone should be our kindred.

Mr. Lanoue.—That is so plain, that if we love a spendthrift, for example, we do not fail to excuse our attachment by finding some good quality in him which may serve as a pretext for it. We blush in secret to appear to love what we ought not to love. If, on the contrary, we are alienated from any one, we do not fail to justify our conduct by accusing him of faults; and in so doing, we mean to say to others, you see clearly that my aversion is only occasioned by the vices of this man.

Mr. Tessier.—That is beyond dispute, and so no intercourse

with the wicked. That is the point to which your religion naturally leads.

Mr. Lanoue.—Unless with the hope of enlightening and reclaiming them to good. Our prisons and galleys do not always contain good people, and yet it is an act of charity to visit them.

Mr. Tessier.—No doubt; but far from sympathising with those people, I feel that I should hate their vices even more strongly, whilst feeling compassion for their persons.

Mr. Lanoue.—Well, Mr. Tessier, it is not only in the galleys and prisons that you may exercise charity. You will everywhere find abandoned men whom you may reform by your counsels; people sunk in sensuality and worldliness, whom you may bring back to reason by moral evidence. There is not a moment in your life in which you cannot fulfil these acts of charity. At one time alms are necessary, at another time advice; elsewhere you may impart consolation in misfortune, or strength in discouragement. If you are filled with love, every action, every word will be charitable. In your recreations, as in your business, you will always be able to give a useful example or a salutary advice.

Mr. Tessier.—You speak of recreation. Can there be charity in that too?

Mr. Lanoue.—It depends on the end which you propose to yourself. Your recreation gives you the means of loving others, of succouring them, of aiding them, and if you do so, it is doubtless a comprehensive act of charity. Mentor shared the pleasures of Telemachus, for the purpose of thus carrying out his reformation. Regeneration is not to be effected merely in your chamber or in your study; you may continue the task every place where you may chance to be. Let us suppose a feast given by friendship; you may be present at it to reconcile contending brothers, to spread peace among men. In our customs, feasts are repasts taken in common. If you share in these from sensuality, you are only a self-seeker; but if you see that there is good to be done there, and that it can be done nowhere else, you hasten thither eagerly; and charity, not gluttony, lends you wings. Our Saviour made no difference between Jew and Samaritan; you should make none either, when you can render a service to society. What matters the form under which you render it, or the occasion which gives rise to it? Besides, joy in itself is not illegitimate. When it is innocent, it is a recreation by which we acquire new strength. We give ourselves up to it when duty is accomplished, with a mind full of that peace which the approbation of our conscience gives, and then joy ascends like an anthem of the heart to thank God who has given us so much pleasure. Take pattern by Jesus; he is our model. You do not see in him the

founder of an austere and joy-forbidding religion. The first miracle he performed was at a marriage feast.

Mr. Tessier.—Yes, at the marriage of Cana, where he changed the water into wine; what is the meaning of that miracle?

Mr. Lanoue.—In the spiritual sense of the Scripture, he changed a riotous assemblage into a company of enlightened men. Water, the emblem of natural truth, which is too often insipid and worthless, was changed into wine, the emblem of divine truth, which gives us light. Every liquor is a symbol. That is expressed in the custom which prevails of drinking in the best beverage we have the health of the persons whom we love the best.

Mr. Tessier.—Then the vinegar which was raised to the lips of Jesus was also an emblem?

Mr. Lanoue.—No doubt, and the truest of all. If wine is the truth, vinegar is this truth corrupted. When the Saviour appeared was not all truth extinct? What had the earth to offer him? Nothing but that truth depraved. Thus you see that the Redeemer, after having tasted the vinegar, cried: "It is finished."

Mr. Tessier.—Your argument is irresistible. This emblem carries conviction with it. Oh! Mr. Lanoue, how many truths do I now perceive even in the smallest details of the life of Jesus! Everything there is food at once for the intellect and the heart. But just as the Messiah was present at a marriage festival, so the first ceremony of the church was likewise instituted by him at a repast shared with his disciples, and this act which was perfectly material in itself, has become the most magnificent symbol he has bequeathed to us. He has taught us, in fact, as often as we take earthly food, to view it as a symbol of the nourishment of the soul, to see in all things love and wisdom from above, which are as necessary for our souls as bread is for our bodies. Like the Saviour, we mingle charity with all the actions of our life, by rendering them moral and spiritual, instead of material, as they all are externally. Oh! what pleasure there is in developing this doctrine of charity! We have only to love—to love unceasingly. And yet, notwithstanding all our love, we may be a mark for calumnies of every kind, and even persecutions.

Mr. Lanoue.—When you are calumniated, thank God that your enemies, to speak ill of you, are forced to have recourse to falsehood. God sees you: your conscience should therefore be tranquil. Why should you regard the false opinions men may entertain of you? By attaching too much importance to them, you show that it is not the good which you have in view, but yourself. If you were detached from yourself, those falsehoods would in no degree affect you. You

say that you will be persecuted ; but if so, you will only share the fate of everything great and good which the world has ever seen. Men who are buried in self, revenge themselves on that genius beside which they sink into nothing, by sarcasms ; and on the virtue which condemns them, by persecution. They never pardon what is pure and noble. Instead of being irritated, rejoice at this point of resemblance which you have to your inimitable model.

Mr. Tessier.—Your life of charity entails difficulties, Mr. Lanoue ; but they are not beyond the strength of man to surmount, nor are they contrary to Nature. By following them, we perfect both ourselves and others. In a word, your charity consists in being in the world what we are in our families. I love my son on account of the good he possesses ; I give him food that he may grow up to usefulness. My neighbour is also my son ; his virtues alone should be the object of my affection. If I supply his physical wants, it ought to be for the purpose of enabling him to be useful to himself and others. The same qualities which make me a good father make me also a good citizen and a good Christian. The Socialists, who believe that all religions except their own are only speculations without results, will not be able to urge the same reproach against yours. You acknowledge the value of good works, like them, and you moreover link these with sublime contemplations which they disdain. They think only of flesh ; you consider both flesh and spirit.

Mr. Lanoue.—You have summed up the question admirably. Now that you are healed, sin no more, for fear that a worse thing come upon you. The man who does evil, not knowing it, is innocent, says the Scripture ; but he who, knowing it, and having once fled from it, falls into it again, is guilty of profanation. You said, in our second conversation, that, in reading of heroic actions, or in seeing on the stage the representation of unmerited misfortune, you felt the charm of virtue. You concluded erroneously from that that you were virtuous on that account alone ; take care of concluding in the same manner now, that the comprehension merely of what was formerly dark to you, can make you religious. You cannot refuse the assent of your understanding to the plain and incontrovertible truths which you have just heard ; they are accompanied by an overwhelming force of evidence ; but I repeat to you once more, you are not a whit more religious for that, if your heart be not opened to a new life. We are about to separate ; I entreat you, before we do so, not to permit the truth which you now know to escape from you, but let it bear fruit in your life and actions.

Mr. Tessier.—But we live in an age in which irreligion is fashionable. What can you say to people who are immersed

in politics? There never was a moment less favourable to religious ideas; they are no longer in fashion. People seem to have thrown off the yoke of religion along with the antiquated institutions of feudal monarchy. Religion is so blended and mixed up with politics, that it is now only a pretext for worldly opinions. You can form no conception of the narrow ideas which are entertained of it. A child believes himself a perfect man because he calls himself disenchanted. I have witnessed many oscillations in society, Mr. Lanoue, but never have I seen an epoch less calculated for tranquil meditation and the peaceful enjoyments of the soul! In fact, if I were to follow my inclination, I should be tempted to turn what I have learned to account in my own case, without attempting to cast pearls before swine. But I know you will tell me that this is weakness, that I ought to be a soldier of Jesus Christ, that I should not fear to follow a chief who has preceded me wearing a crown of thorns, and that, in a word, if I have received some enlightenment, I should not conceal it beneath a bushel.

Mr. Lanoue.—No doubt, you will have to suffer for your convictions if you proclaim them; and yet you will not fulfil your destination, if, being in possession of the light, you communicate it to no one. Do not then be afraid of ridicule; do not be discouraged by fruitless efforts. Do what you believe to be just, and you shall be rewarded by the reflection that you have been the defender of a truth useful to men. Leave confirmed Error in the religion it has made for itself. In weak minds, you would perhaps destroy certain hopes only to inspire in their place a culpable doubt and distrust: amongst the Scribes and Pharisees you would only excite hatred. Leave these, then, and come to the aid of those who, having lost all faith, wish, notwithstanding, to illumine their minds with the light; come to the aid of those who doubt; assist those who have loving hearts, but who cannot escape from the inextricable labyrinth of mysteries without explanation, and ceremonies without an object. I agree with you, that you will find the majority in the present day indifferent, but that should not discourage you. You do not know the times; it is the Lord alone who brings about everything in its proper place. If you allow yourself to be discouraged because society is in a political crisis which prevents men from following anything but their private interests, recollect that everything passes away except those things that have their root in the human heart. It is in vain that we attempt to conceal from ourselves the need we have for religion; religion is always ready to receive and comfort him who suffers, and in our social struggles there are always some who are unfortunate. Religion is ever ready to console deceived ambition, and every day sees fresh illusions

destroyed. Seek out the unfortunate : their number may appear small at present ; but wait a little ; every day will bring you some new victim of misfortune or ill-health ; and, after a few years, you will no longer be able to count up the number of the erring or unfortunate brethren whom suffering has brought back to your God.

I feel, Mr. Tessier, that the interest I take in you gives strength to my words. Ah ! be assured that God has not abandoned his work ; it is only worldly and erring man who has for a moment forgotten his God. In the contests of factions, a section of the combatants has directed its hostilities towards what is called the State Religion, inasmuch as this State Religion has been employed as an engine of oppression by its enemies ; but there is no religion that belongs to a state, and God is never dethroned along with kings. A wide-spread religious movement is now commencing, unknown to you, in that class of society which takes the lead in creating opinion. The human race is in reality impelled onwards by a vast current ; you are merely in the eddy of the waters, and mistake this partial retrograde movement for the general direction of the stream. But do you not see that there is nothing fixed on earth ? Virtue has its eclipses, like error. Men become tired of all that is, and always run after what is not. A thing is the rage to-day because it was unknown yesterday ; it will be out of fashion to-morrow, because it has been seen to-day, and because a day satisfies the caprices of men. The divine institutions cannot be appreciated by these fugitive impressions. We apply our measures to them in vain ; it is not men who make them : they establish themselves in spite of men. Men say that they will have no religion ; yes, and the negroes of the coast of Guinea likewise calumniate the sun, and yet the glorious orb rises and sets as usual. They insult him, but he serenely accomplishes his course. Religion, in the same way, passes over the horizon of men who say that they will have none ; it progresses despite their clamour ; and, when they are tired of their insipid pamphlets, when empty fashion can enchain them no longer, religion which, like the sun, had disappeared in the west, once more lights up the eastern gate of heaven, and they then turn towards it, because for them it is new. They honour it, because, like some article of fashion, they have not seen it for some time. Habit wearies them a second time, and darkness returns. It is always thus that we must expect to see light and virtue, beauty and truth, alternately appreciated and calumniated by weak and inconstant men, who tire of everything—of love, benevolence, and science—who, in a word, know so little of what they want, that they are disgusted even with themselves.

Do not allow your opinions to depend on the voice of an insensate crowd. They are carried away by caprice; you have the polar star of hope to guide you! The pillar of the Israelites is between you and them, the luminous side is turned towards you; the crowd only perceives the shadow. Before parting from you, Mr. Tessier, I shall conceal nothing; it is now that I can explain myself to you without reserve. This pillar of fire of which I speak is the new Jerusalem; its doctrines you have just heard. This is the Christianity which you sought for with so much ardour when you vainly endeavoured to find the truth among the Reformers, the Roman Catholics, and the Socialists. This is not a state religion, and it never can be one. It is the truth, and the truth is of no particular age or country. It will probably not gain the assent of those who blindly follow the general mass; but what does that matter? It will not spring into existence on such a day, in consequence of such a decree; but what has inward worship to do with decrees? It is in your enlightened conscience that it has its seat, and conscience ought never to blush for the truth, nor consult fashion and opinion before adopting or rejecting its articles of faith.

You owe obedience to the laws of your country, but never allow yourself to imagine that there is any incompatibility between your duty to your country and your religious convictions. Perform your duty to your country, but let religion reign supreme. You belong to yourself and to your family, but both your family and yourself belong to the state; while even above the state there reign humanity, truth, and justice. True patriotism will never cause you to become indifferent to humanity; it will never force you to lie to your conscience, or to trample divine or human justice under foot. Well, in that consists all the religion that I have taught you. If you be told that you are not a patriot in the same way that others in your parish are, and according to the ideas of your times, do not be disturbed by these sarcasms; if you hold firm to the principles which you have adopted, you will always be a faithful member of the great human family. Instead of the conventionalism of a day, your law will be imperishable—you will set before you the Good as the object of every action, the True as the motive of every thought. While you possess these riches from above, it is your duty, beyond a doubt, to share them with your country. But if these laws be not the laws of the land you live in, do not on that account descend from your high position; be assured that your country is beneath your level. It will one day rise to it, for error has no abiding duration. Give your family then that nourishment which your fellow-citizens disdain; partake of it yourself, in order that you may fulfil that law which you have now learned

—that law which requires you to perfect yourself, so that you may be one day capable of uniting yourself to Him who is perfection itself.

When Mr. Lanoue ceased to speak, the notary could only thank him with an affectionate pressure of the hand, and withdrew, deeply penetrated by the truth, and convinced for the remainder of his days.

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